

STARBLAZER

SPACE FICTION ADVENTURE IN PICTURES No. 164

24p

When Earth was invaded by the brutal Zahn, the dome city of Alba was forced to take to space to survive . . . and now it had to fight for its very existence.

The FIGHTING STARDOME



STARBLAZER

THE SEEDS OF MADNESS

AFTER THE MANY CIVIL WARS, EARTH'S AIR, SOIL AND SEA WERE DEEPLY IRRADIATED. OVER THE YEARS MEN EMIGRATED, UNTIL ONLY ONE DOME CITY REMAINED. ITS PEOPLE, SCIENTISTS AND ENGINEERS, NUMBERED BARELY A HUNDRED. THEIR PURPOSE WAS TO PURSUE GRAVITY NULLIFICATION EXPERIMENTS, SO POTENTIALLY DEVASTATING THAT ONLY A WORTHLESS PLANET COULD BE RISKED. THE ZAHN, AN ALIEN RACE WERE PURSUING THE SAME LINE OF RESEARCH — THEY HAD SOLVED ONE HALF, EARTH THE OTHER, AND THE ZAHN WERE DETERMINED TO BE IN CONTROL OF BOTH HALVES. EARTH'S ONLY CHANCE WAS THE MEN OF THE FIGHTING STARDOME.

THE FIGHTING STARDOME

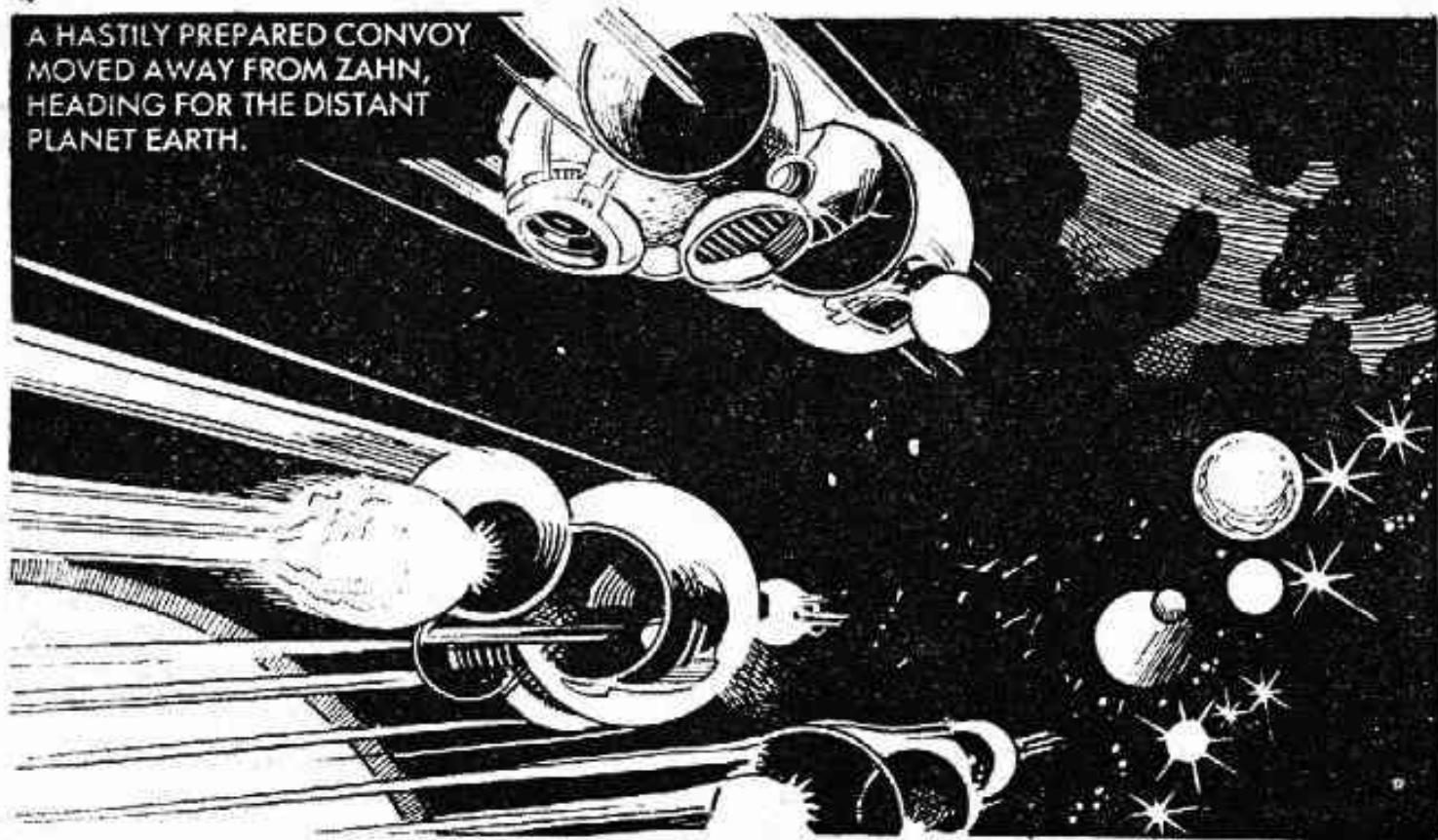
ON THE FAR OFF PLANET ZAHN, A DECISION WAS MADE THAT HELD TERRIBLE DANGER FOR EARTH.



OUR SPY PROBES INDICATE THAT GRAVITY RESEARCH IS FAR ADVANCED ON SOL III. YOUR MISSION, COMMANDER NEXUS, IS TO TAKE THEIR DOME CITY, ALBA, INTACT.



A HASTILY PREPARED CONVOY
MOVED AWAY FROM ZAHN,
HEADING FOR THE DISTANT
PLANET EARTH.



AFTER MANY UNITS IN HYPER TRAVEL THE ZAHN FORCE REACHED EARTH. THEIR FIRST TASK
WAS TO BREAK THROUGH ALBA'S PROTECTIVE SHIELD—

THE FULL BROADSIDE OF OUR THREE
WARSIPS IS ABOUT EQUAL TO THE
STRENGTH OF THAT ENERGY SHELL. WE
CAN USE IT WITHOUT CAUSING DAMAGE
TO DOME CITY.



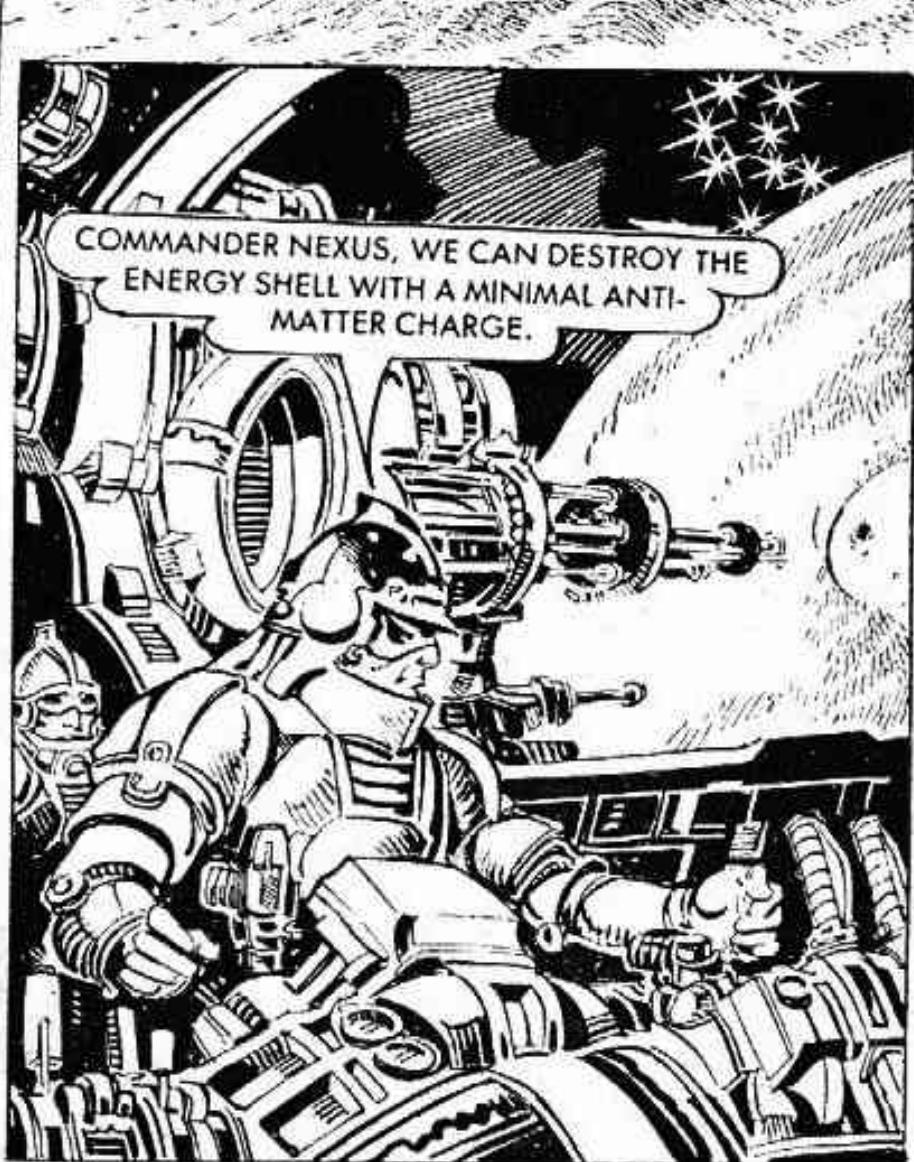
THE FIRST KNOWLEDGE THE ALBA DEFENCE FORCE HAD OF ATTACK WAS WHEN A SECTION SUDDENLY WEAKENED.



ACTIVATE SECONDARY DEFENCE.



NEXUS, THE ZAHN COMMANDER
WAS WATCHING CAREFULLY—



COMMANDER NEXUS, WE CAN DESTROY THE
ENERGY SHELL WITH A MINIMAL ANTI-
MATTER CHARGE.

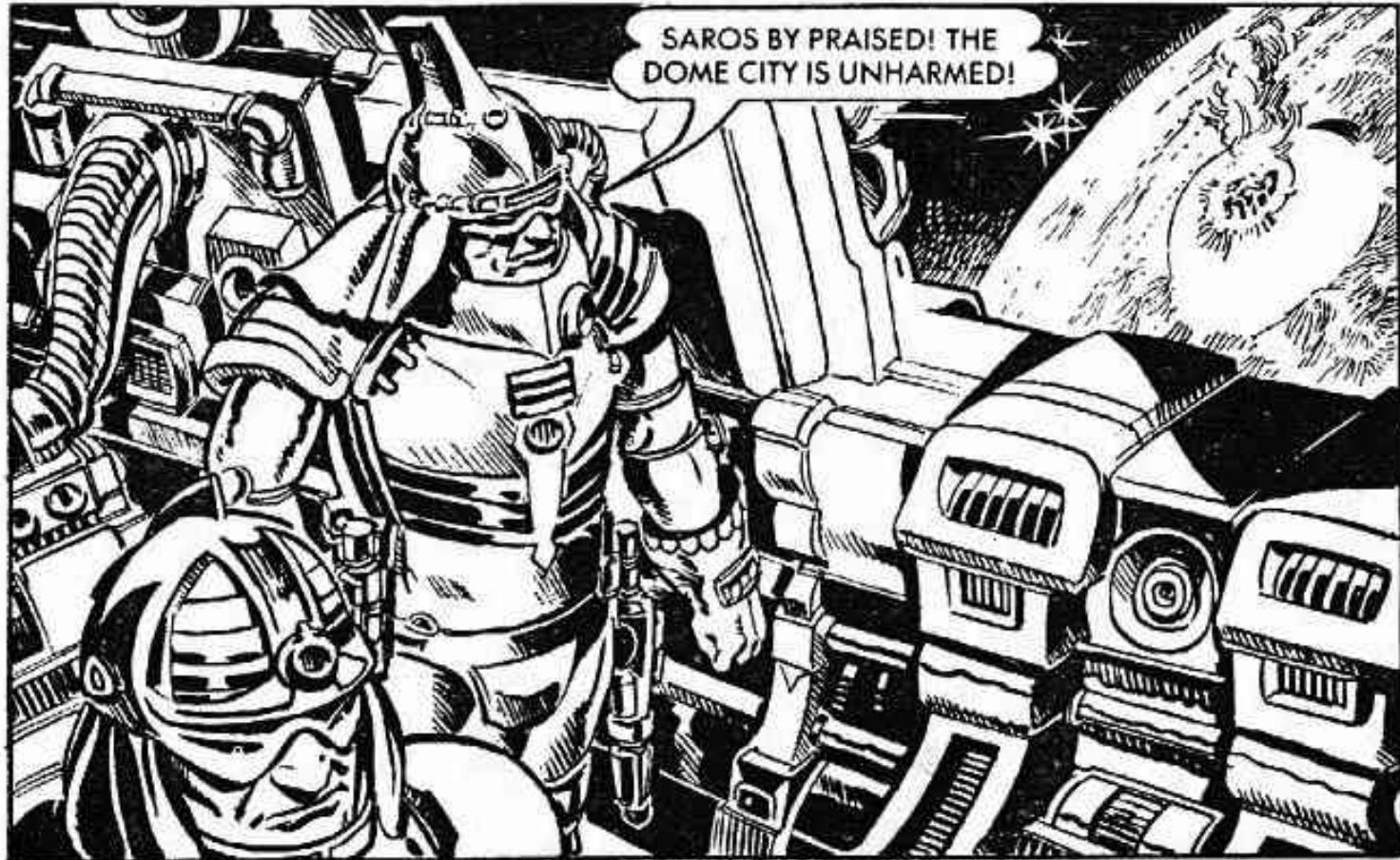


THE GAP HAS STOPPED
GROWING. THE SHIELD WILL
CLOSE UP AGAIN. GET ME THE
LABSHIP!

THE ENERGY SHIELD COULD NOT WITHSTAND THE SUDDEN ENERGY FLUXES CAUSED BY THE INTRODUCTION OF ANTI-MATTER—



SAROS BY PRAISED! THE
DOME CITY IS UNHARMED!



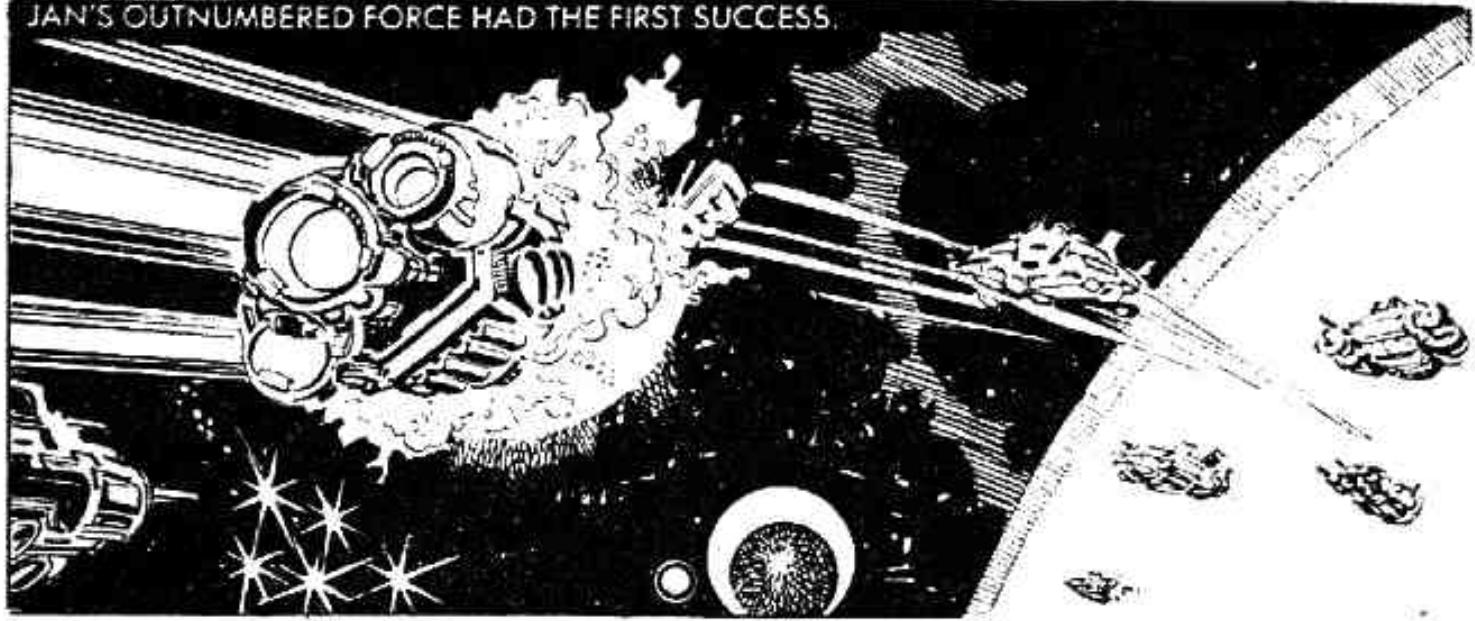


DOME CAPTAIN JAN NEDERLANT ORDERED THE PATHETIC DEFENCE FORCE INTO SPACE.



WHOEVER THEY ARE, THEY MUST
ATTEMPT A LANDING. IF THERE'S ANY
CHOICE, GO FOR TROOPSHIPS, NOT
ESCORTS.

JAN'S OUTNUMBERED FORCE HAD THE FIRST SUCCESS.



THAT'S FINISHED OFF
ONE! ON TO THE NEXT.



THE TERRAN PILOTS, TOTALLY INEXPERIENCED IN SPACEWAR, HAD NO IDEA OF
THE BLAST RANGE FROM A DETONATING DEEPSPACE CRAFT. IN ATMOSPHERE
THE EXPLOSION WAS HUGE.



ONE EXPLOSION DESTROYED OR DAMAGED THE ENTIRE DEFENCE FORCE.



THAT'S THE END OF OUR SPACE DEFENCE. I'M GOING TO CRASH IN THE NUCLEAR PITS.



NEDERLANT REPORTING CRASH POSITION 4368N 2143E.

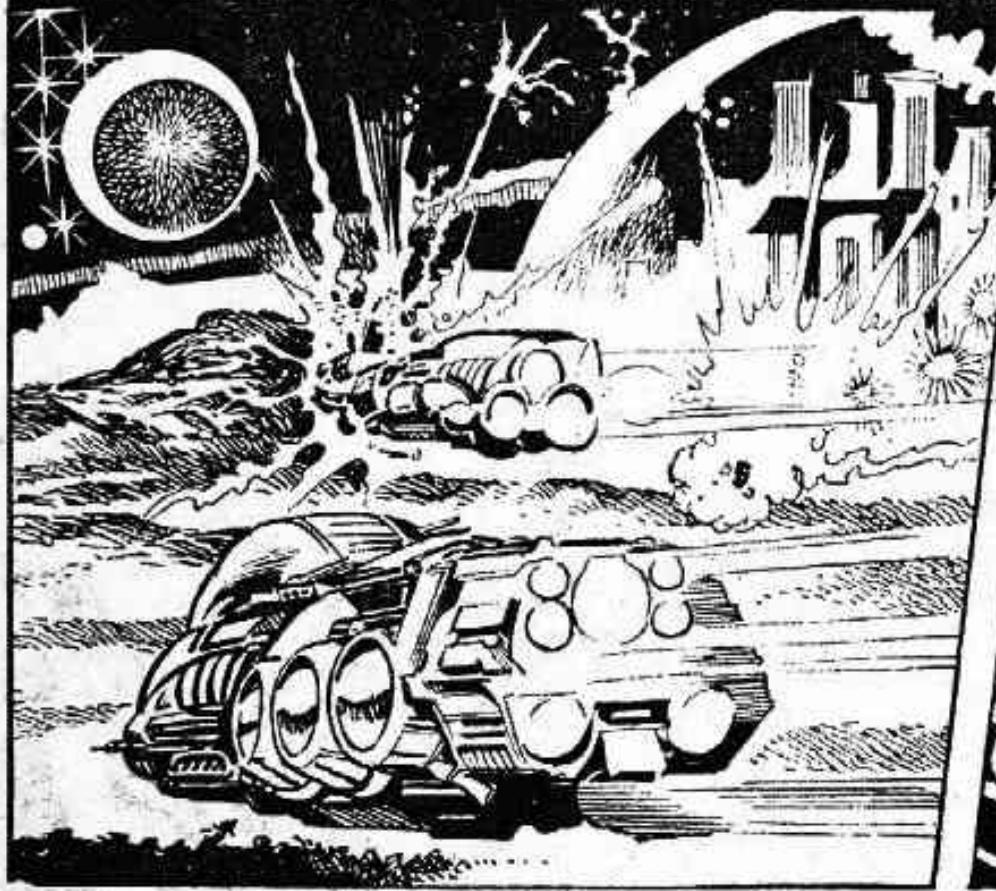
THAT'S THE SLAV BLOCK, CAN'T HELP! WE HAVE OUR HANDS FULL HERE. GOODBYE AND GOOD LUCK!

THE CURT REPLY WAS ALL JAN RECEIVED FROM THE OVER-BURNED DEFENDERS OF DOME CITY IN NORTHERN EUROPE.

THE DOME DEFENCES WERE BEING REMORSELESSLY BATTERED.



WITH THE DOME'S SPACE DEFENCE SILENCED, TWO ZAHN TROOPSHIPS CAME IN TO LAND, BUT ONE OF THEM WENT OUT OF CONTROL BECAUSE OF RADIATION AFFECTED EQUIPMENT.



NEXUS WATCHED, AND WAS DISPLEASED.



DOOMWRAITHS OF DRACO!
LET'S GET ON WITH IT!

THE ZAHN STORMED THE DOME—



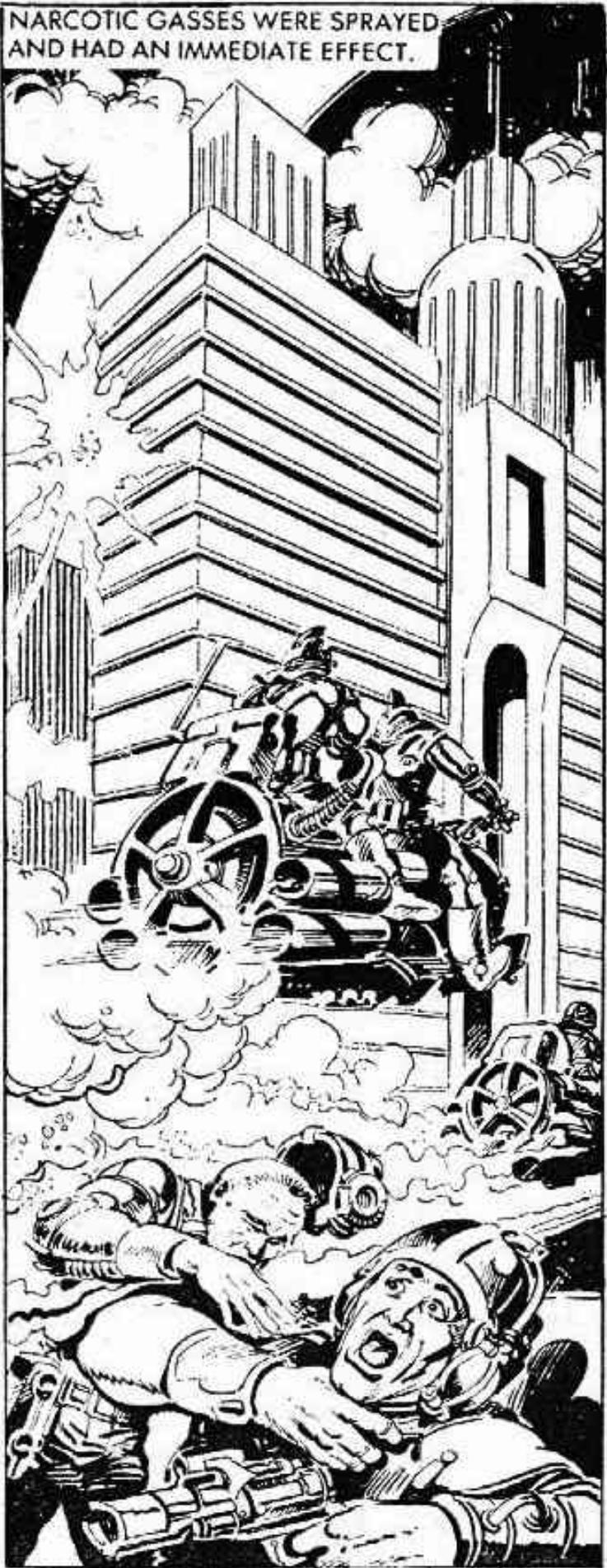
BUT HUMAN DETERMINATION COST HUNDREDS OF ZAHN LIVES.



BUT ONCE THE ZAHN STORMTROOPS REACHED DOME CITY, THEIR SUPERIOR ARMOUR GUARANTEED THEM EASY VICTORY.



NARCOTIC GASSES WERE SPRAYED AND HAD AN IMMEDIATE EFFECT.



AGAR, THE HEAD TECHNICIAN, WAS THWARTED IN HIS ATTEMPT TO FOIL THE ZAHN.



NEXUS BEAMED DOWN AND BEGAN ASSESSING THE SITUATION—



USING STANDARD TRANSLATOR PACKS LONG, BRUTAL SESSIONS OF BEATINGS FOLLOWED, AS NEXUS TRIED TO GAIN THE INFORMATION HE REQUIRED.



ONCE OUTSIDE—



THREE SCIENTISTS WERE SHUTTLED DOWN FROM THE LABSHIP TO COLLECT AGAR'S INFORMATION—



UNKNOWN TO THE ZAHN, THE LAB DOOR COULD BE ACCOUSTICALLY OPERATED BY CERTAIN PERSONNEL — AND AGAR WAS ONE OF THEM.



AGAR — SHUT!



BUT THE DIAL COULD ONLY BE USED BY PERSONNEL WHOSE HANDPRINTS HAD BEEN CODED
IN. FOR THOSE WHOSE HANDPRINTS WEREN'T RECOGNISED — A CHARGE OF ELECTROSTUN.



IN THE CONFUSION, AGAR LEAPT FOR
THE AUTO-DESTRUCT DEVICE—

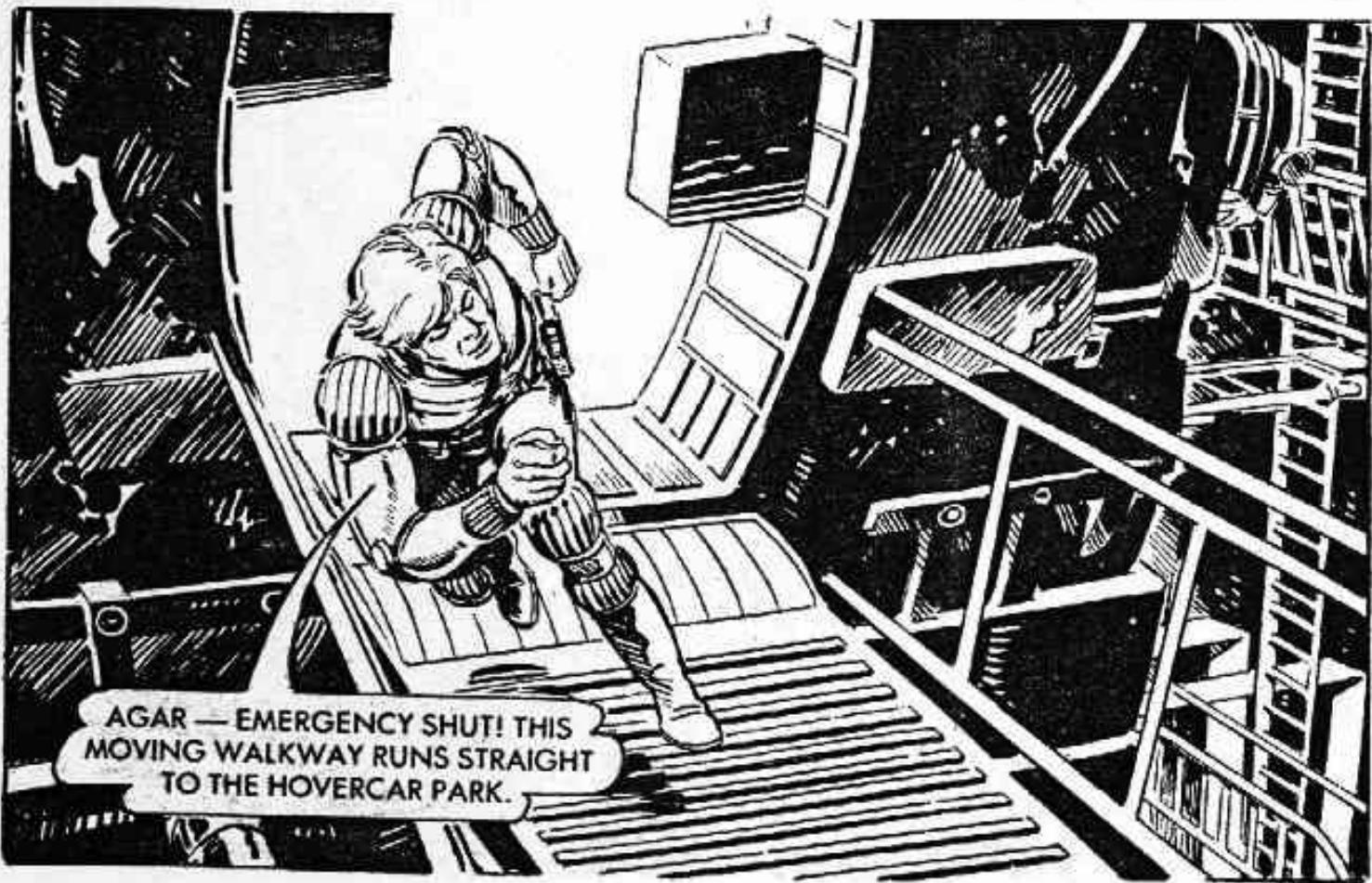


HE TURNED TO HIS
LAST MEANS OF ESCAPE.

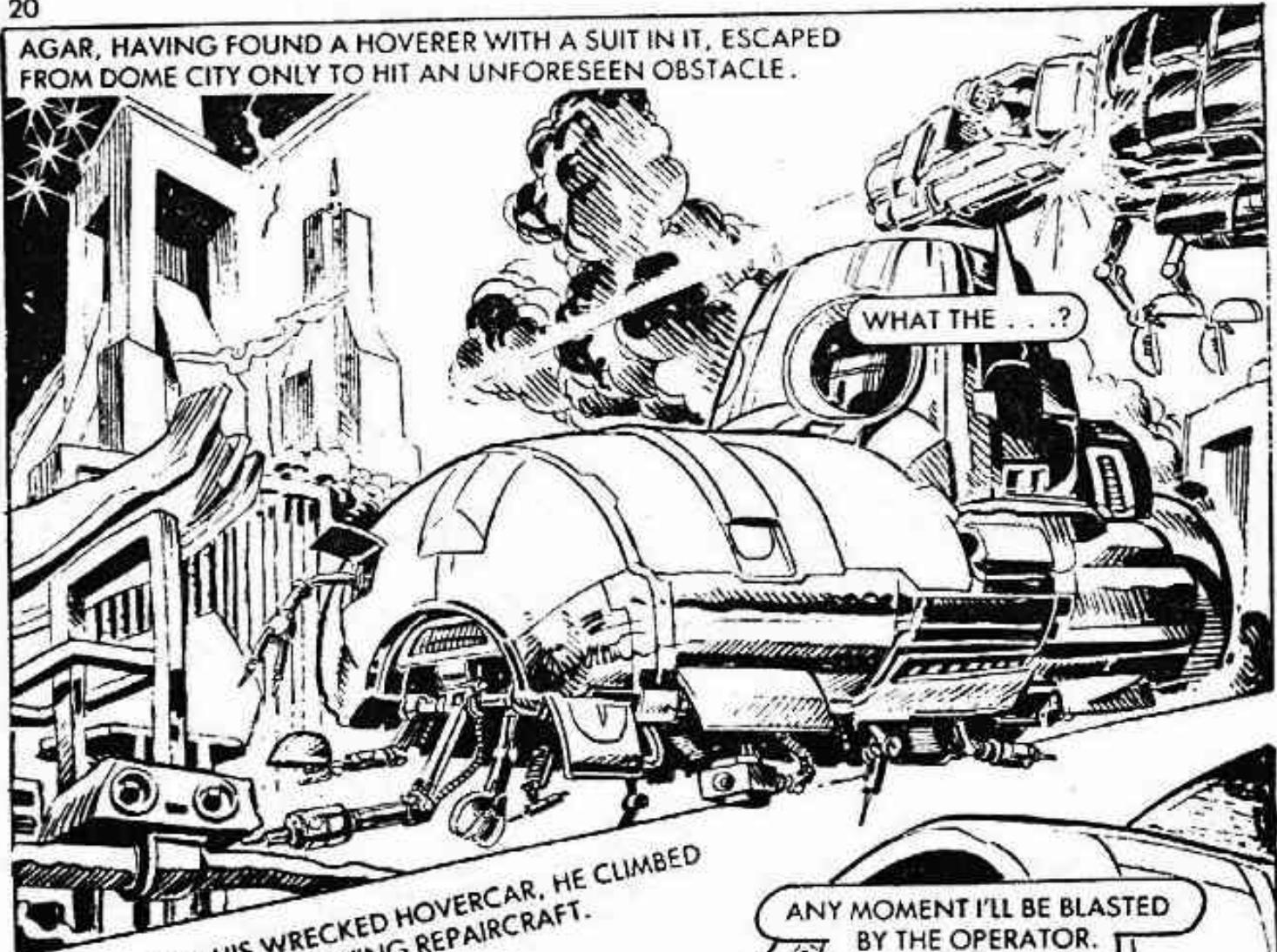
AGAR — EMERGENCY OPEN!



AGAR — EMERGENCY SHUT! THIS
MOVING WALKWAY RUNS STRAIGHT
TO THE HOVERCAR PARK.



AGAR, HAVING FOUND A HOVERER WITH A SUIT IN IT, ESCAPED FROM DOME CITY ONLY TO HIT AN UNFORESEEN OBSTACLE.



FLUNG FROM HIS WRECKED HOVERCAR, HE CLIMBED DESPERATELY UP THE FLYING REPAIRCRAFT.

ANY MOMENT I'LL BE BLASTED BY THE OPERATOR.

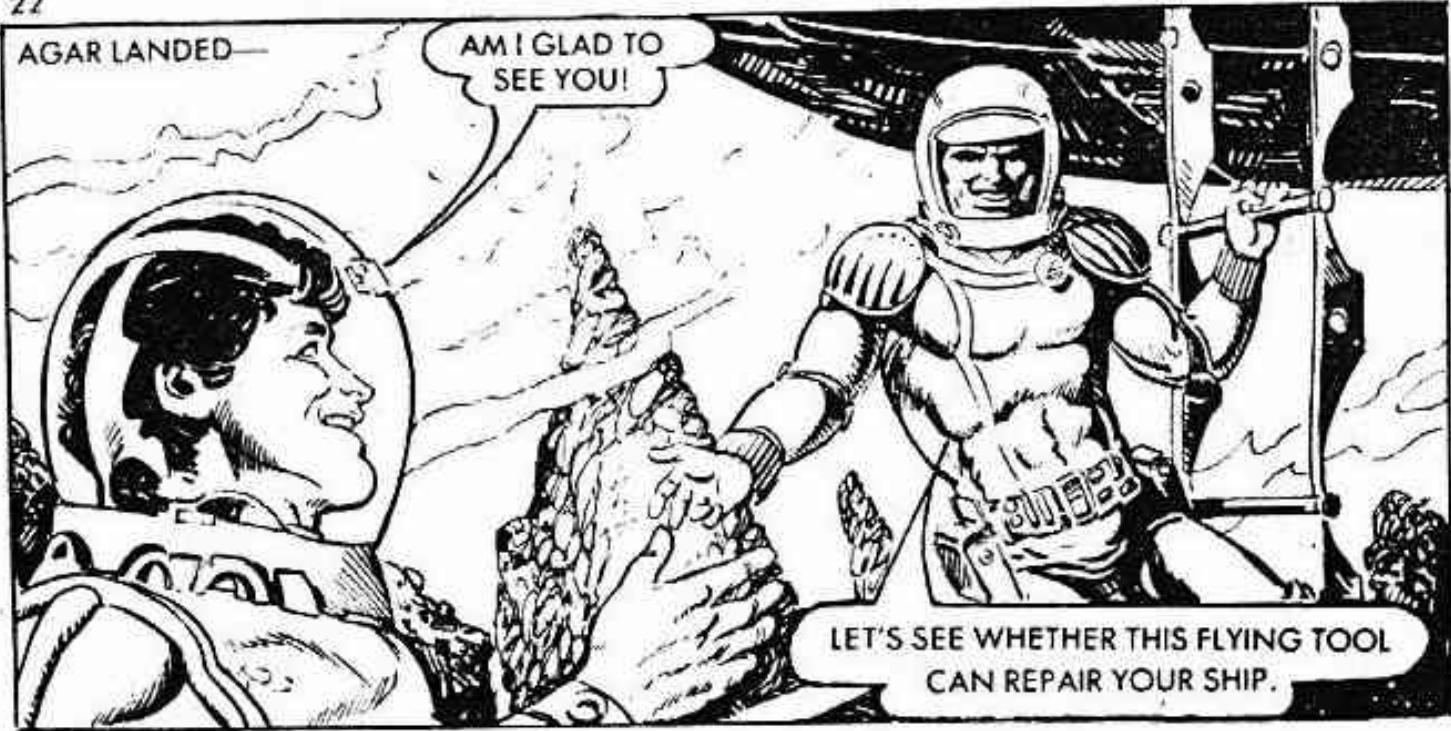


AGAR REACHED THE COCKPIT OF THE CRAFT, TO FIND IT UNMANNED—

SURPRISE, SURPRISE! FULLY AUTOMATED!
IF I CAN CONTROL IT MANUALLY, I
COULD PROBABLY REACH JAN.

AGAR SUCCEEDED IN GAINING CONTROL AND
FED IN THE SLAV BLOC CO-ORDINATES.

THERE HE IS, AND ALIVE! WHAT A
DIABOLICAL HELLHOLE TO COME DOWN IN!



BUT THERE WAS NO TIME FOR REPAIRS — A ZAHN PURSUER HAD TRACKED THEM DOWN.



THE ZAHN CRAFT LANDED, AND THE TROOPERS FILED OUT—

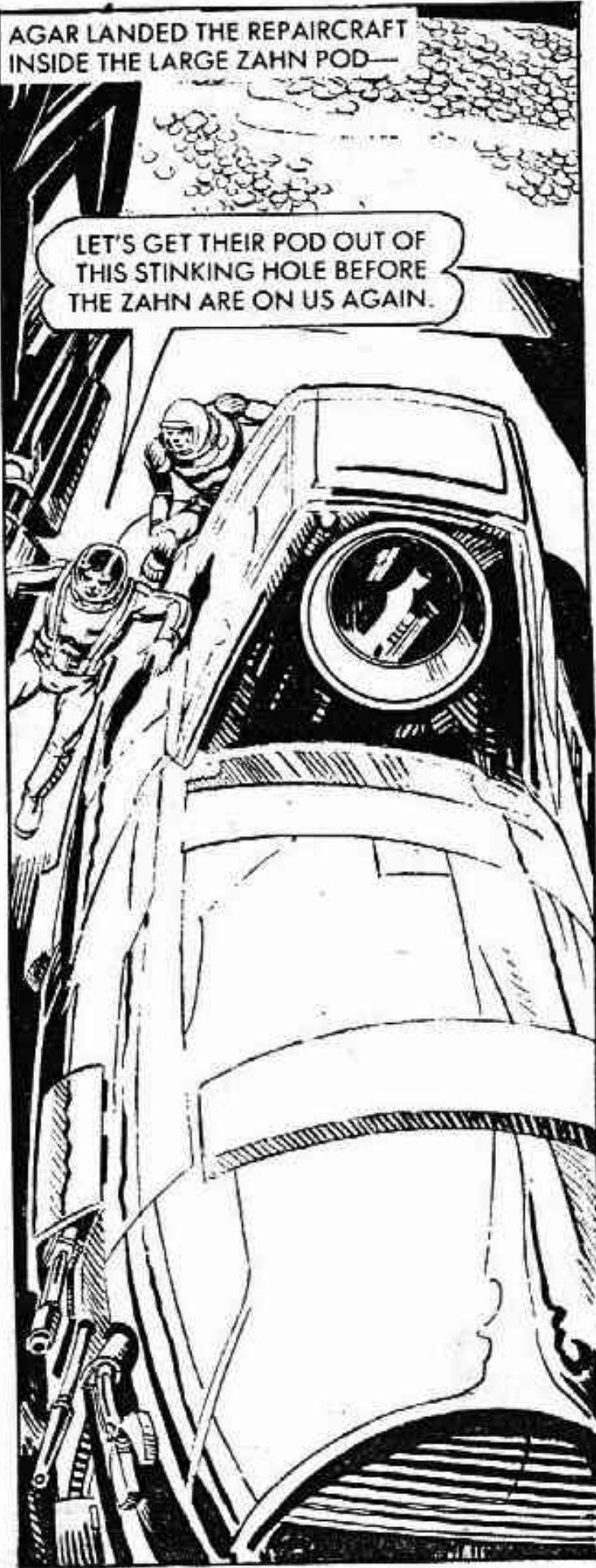


SUDDENLY, THE REPAIRCRAFT SWEEPED DOWN—





AGAR'S HIT AND RUN TACTICS
CONFUSED THE ZAHN.



AGAR LANDED THE REPAIRCRAFT
INSIDE THE LARGE ZAHN POD

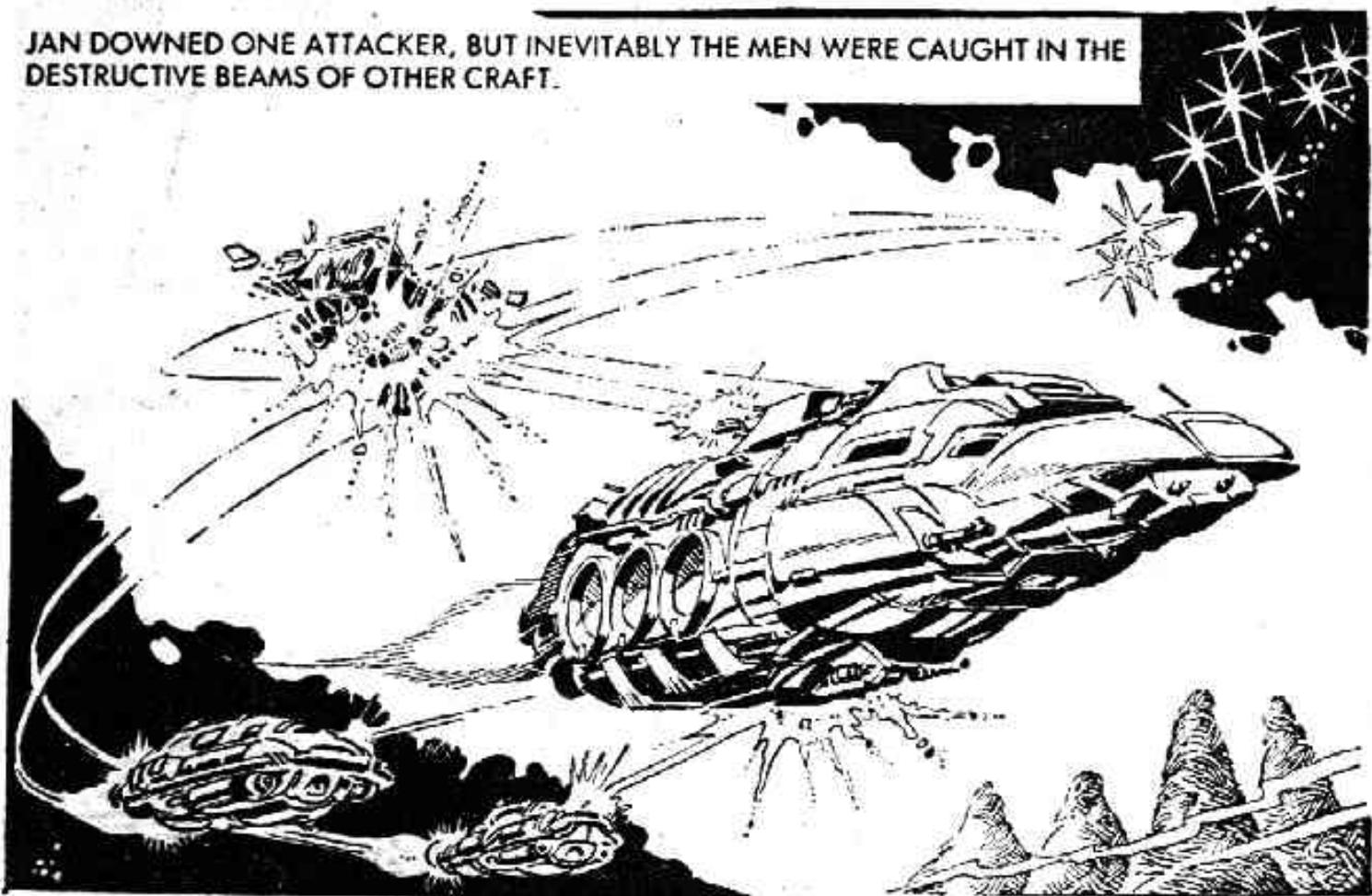
LET'S GET THEIR POD OUT OF
THIS STINKING HOLE BEFORE
THE ZAHN ARE ON US AGAIN.

AS THEY LIFTED OFF, OTHER PURSUIT CRAFT ARRIVED—

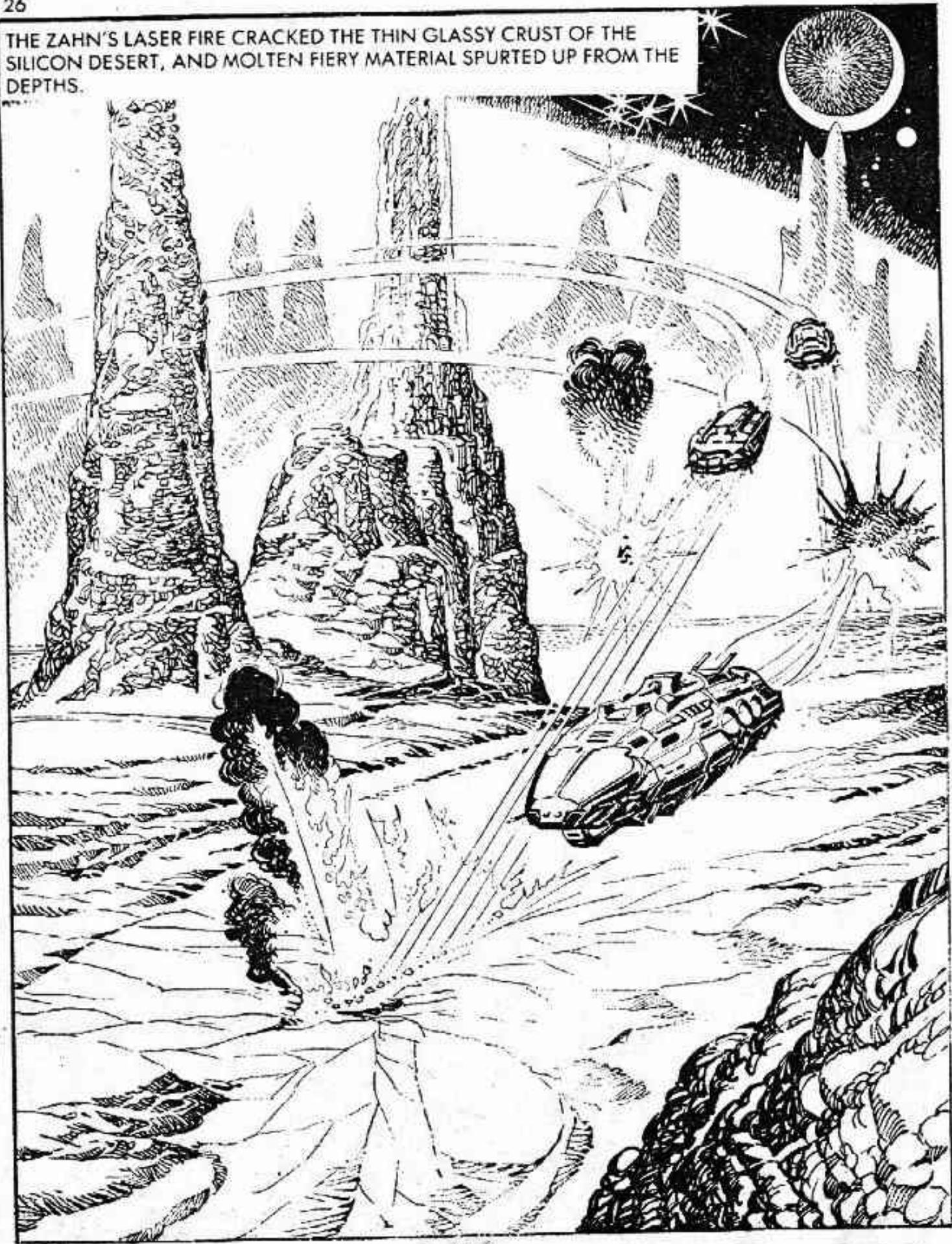
THEY'RE GAINING
ON US, JAN.

THAT'S WHY I'M HEADING FOR SILICON
DESERT. IT'S THE ONLY PLACE WHERE
WE'D STAND A CHANCE IF WE'RE
BROUGHT DOWN.

JAN DOWND ONE ATTACKER, BUT INEVITABLY THE MEN WERE CAUGHT IN THE
DESTRUCTIVE BEAMS OF OTHER CRAFT.



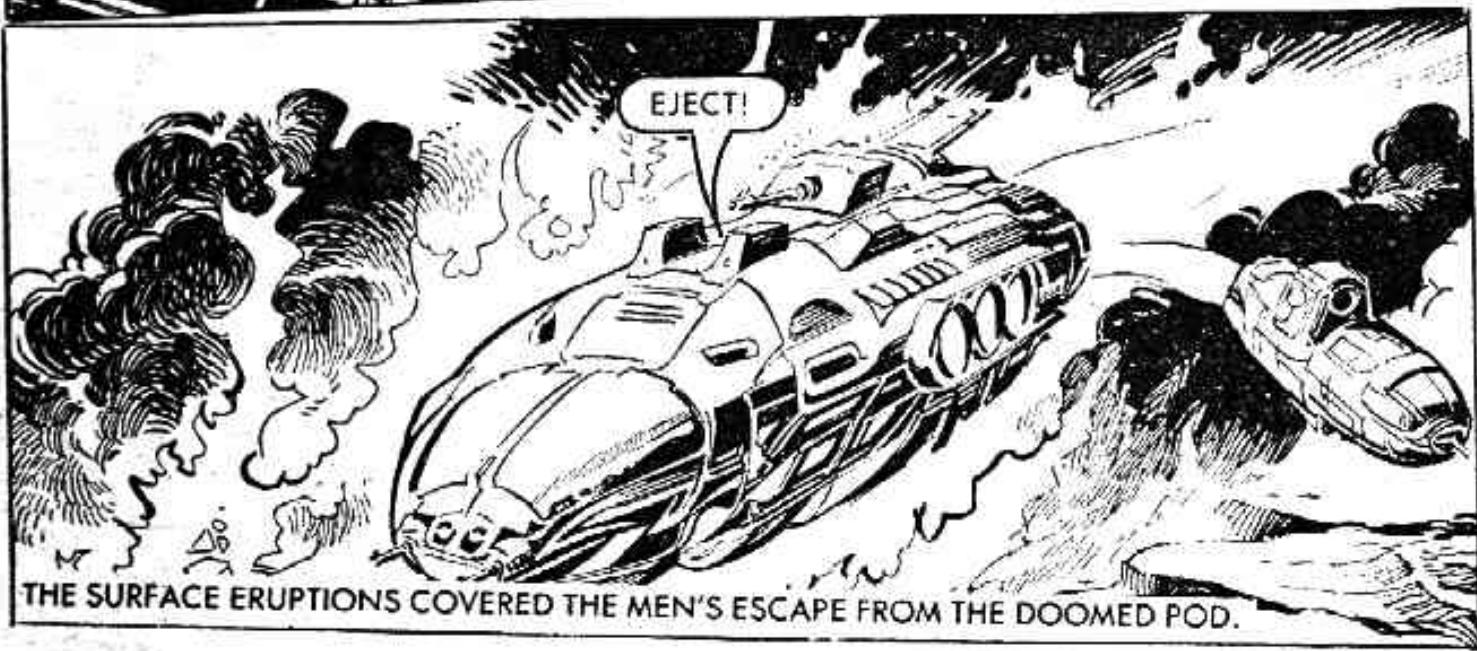
THE ZAHN'S LASER FIRE CRACKED THE THIN GLASSY CRUST OF THE SILICON DESERT, AND MOLTEN FIERY MATERIAL SPURTED UP FROM THE DEPTHS.



THEY DECIDED TO RETURN TO THE REPAIRSHIP.



EJECT!

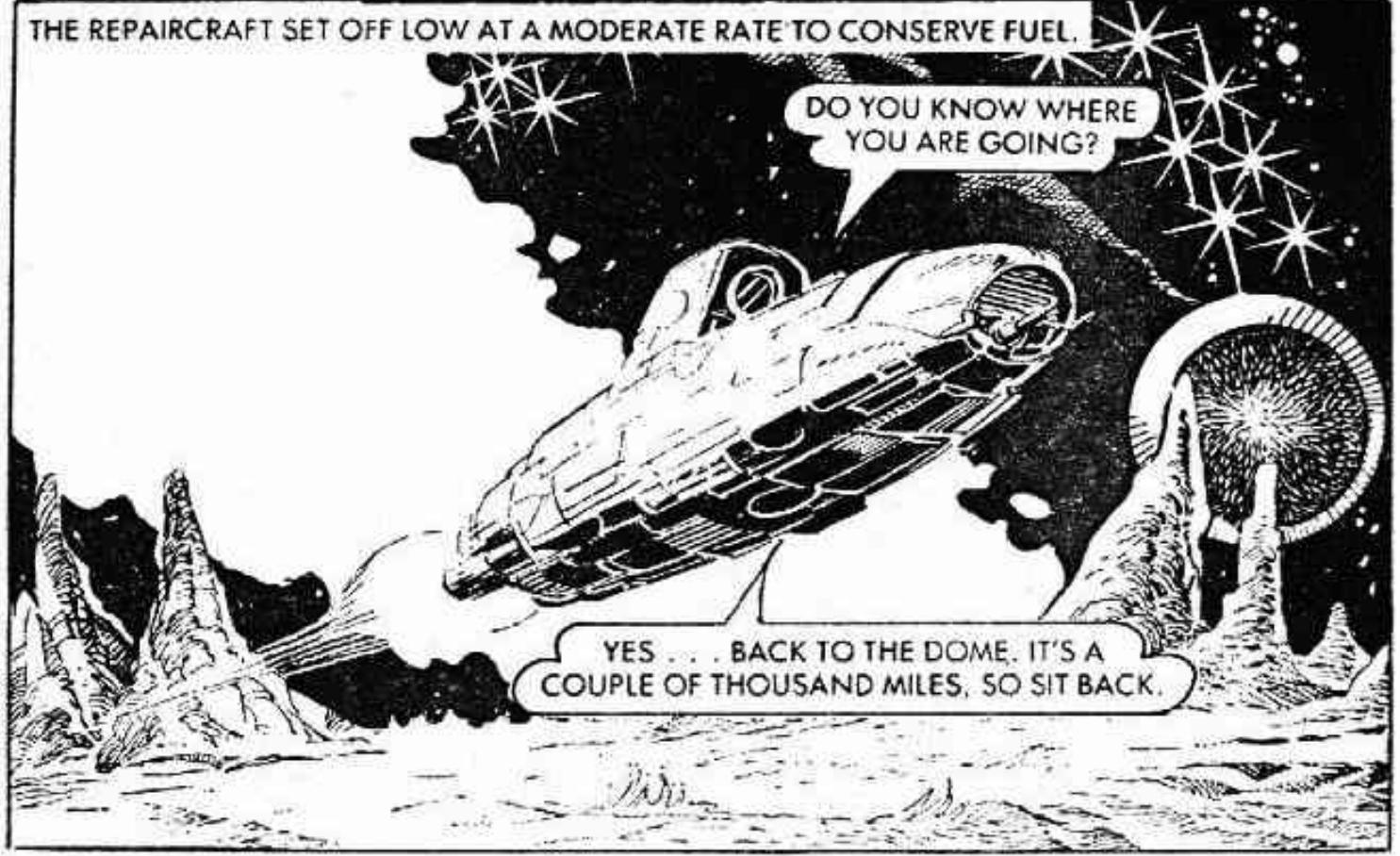


THE SURFACE ERUPTIONS COVERED THE MEN'S ESCAPE FROM THE DOOMED POD.

AGAR AND JAN REACHED THE SURFACE UNSEEN.



THE REPAIRCRAFT SET OFF LOW AT A MODERATE RATE TO CONSERVE FUEL.



DO YOU KNOW WHERE
YOU ARE GOING?

YES . . . BACK TO THE DOME. IT'S A
COUPLE OF THOUSAND MILES, SO SIT BACK.

THEY STOPPED FREQUENTLY TO SEARCH ABANDONED STATIONS FOR ANYTHING THAT
WOULD HELP THEM FIGHT THE ZAHN.



AN OLD HYDROPONIC CANOPY! USED TO
GROW FOOD FOR ONE OF THE DEAD CITIES.

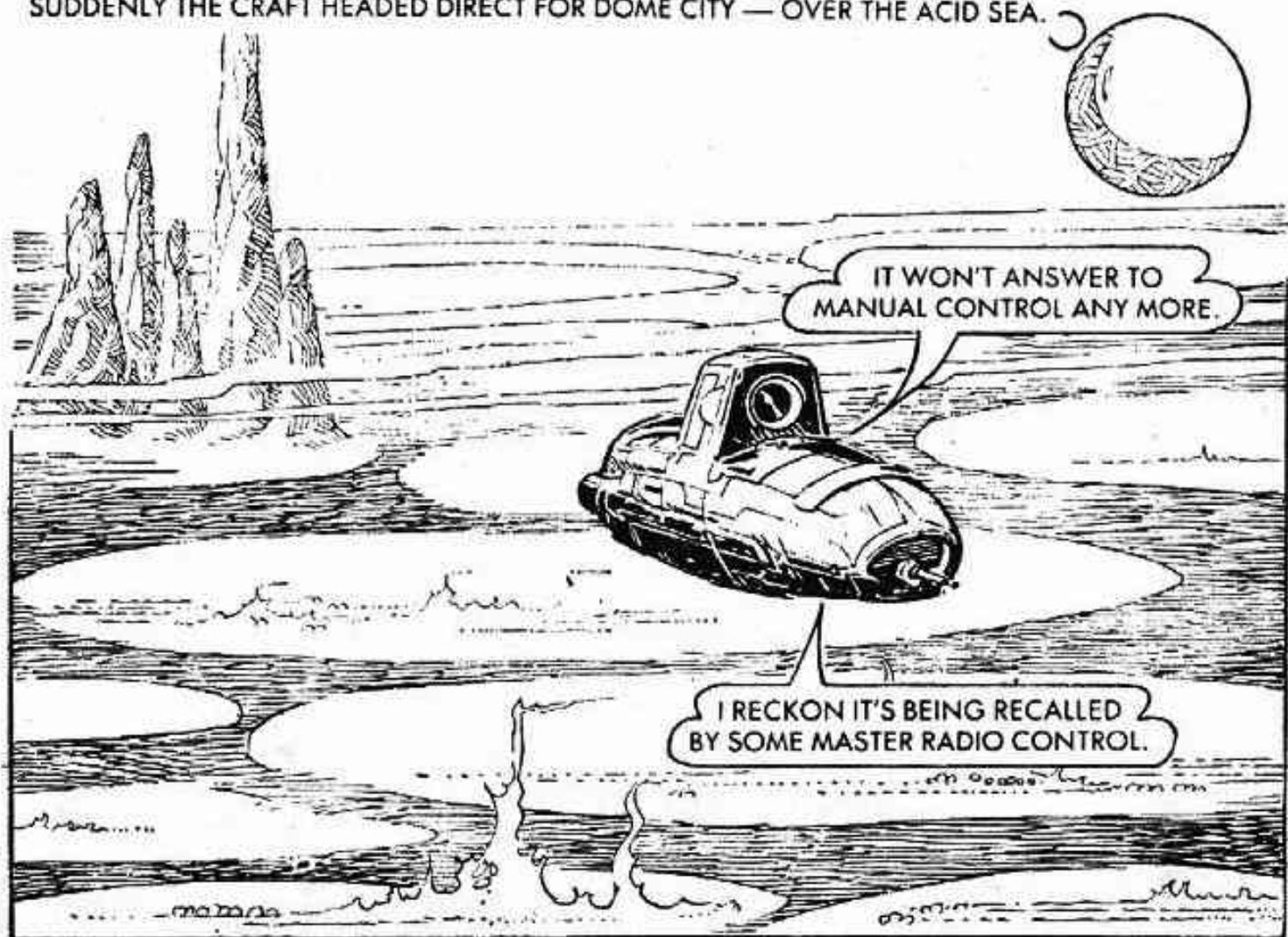
LET'S SEE WHAT
WE CAN FIND.



THEY CONTINUED, SKIPPING THE GREAT ACID SEA, KEEPING THE SILICON DESERT TO ONE SIDE.



SUDDENLY THE CRAFT HEADED DIRECT FOR DOME CITY — OVER THE ACID SEA.



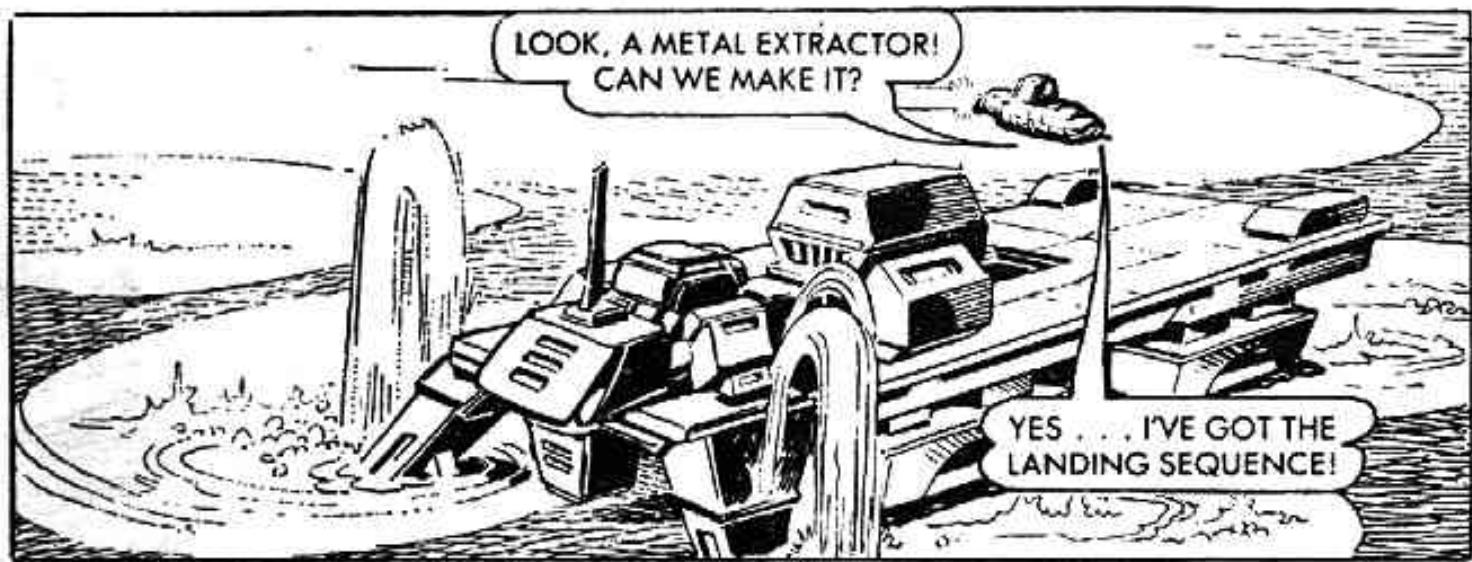
ON INVESTIGATION THEY DISCOVERED THE CRAFT WAS BEING RECALLED BECAUSE OF FUEL SHORTAGE.



I CAN PROGRAMME A LANDING . . .

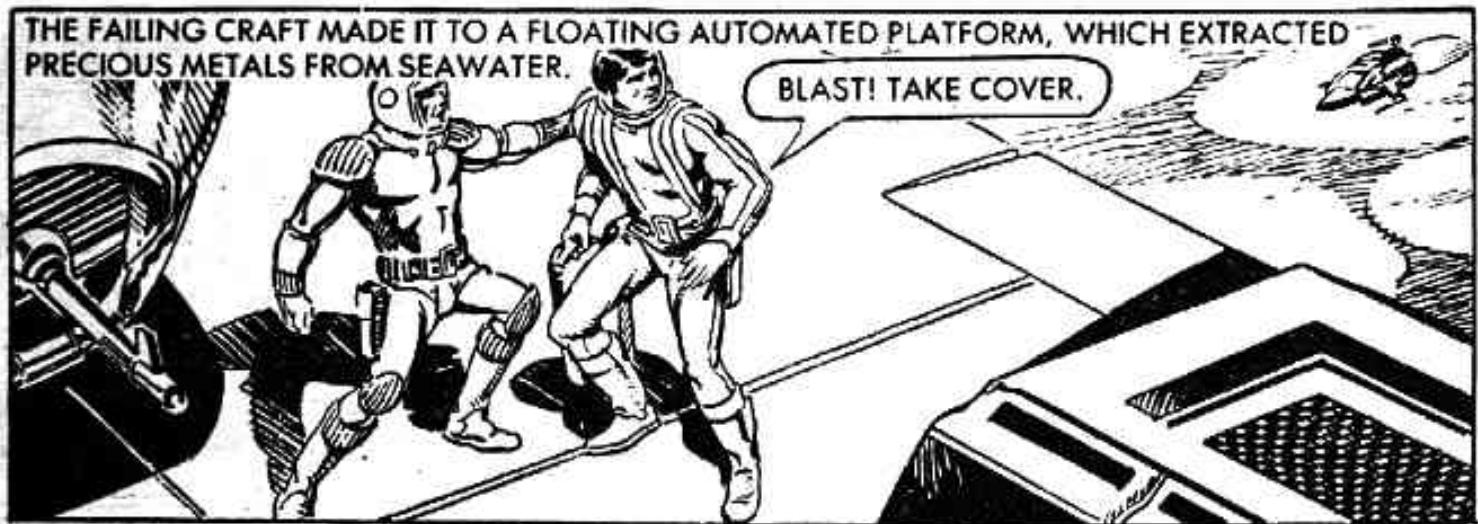


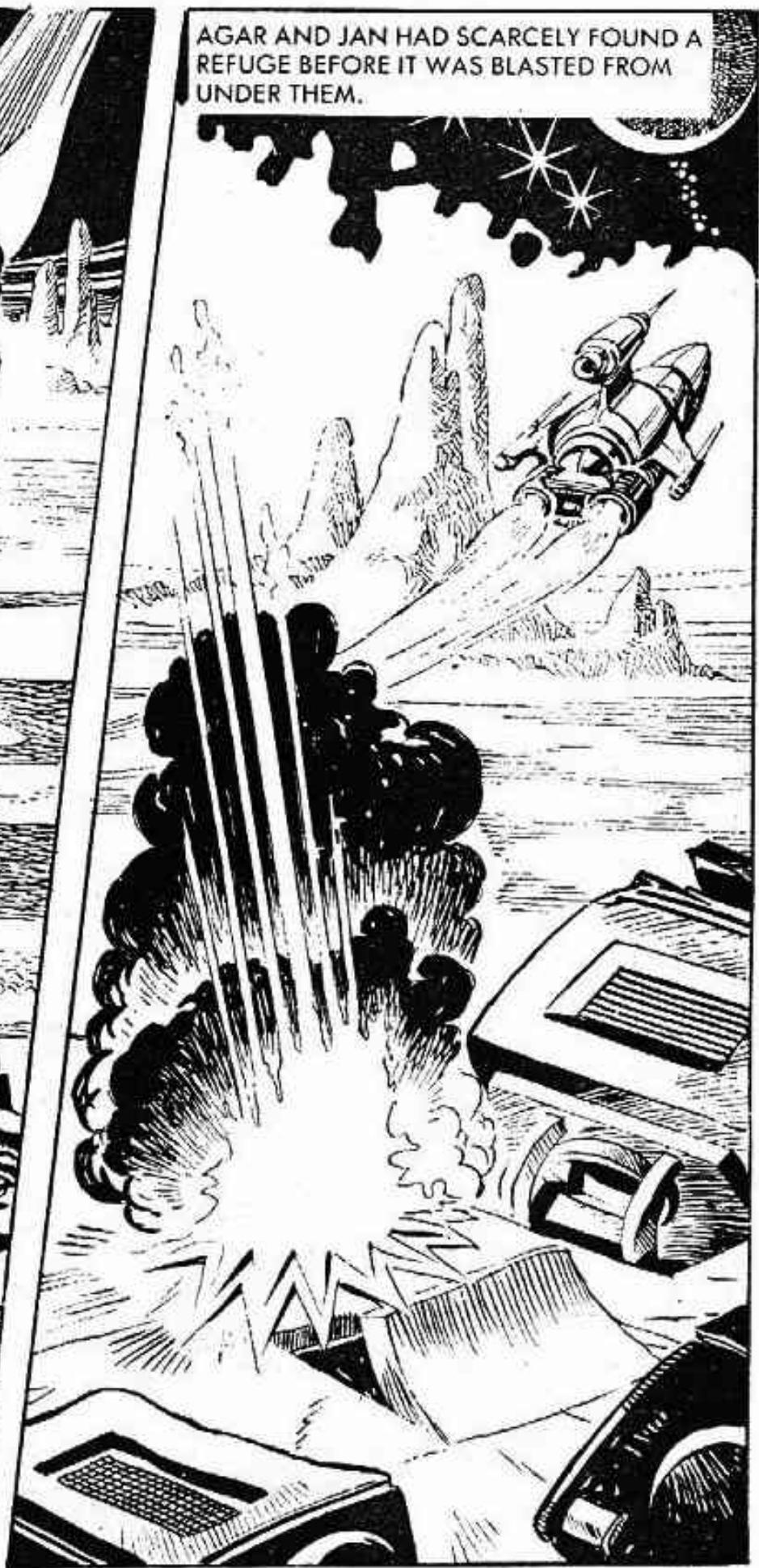
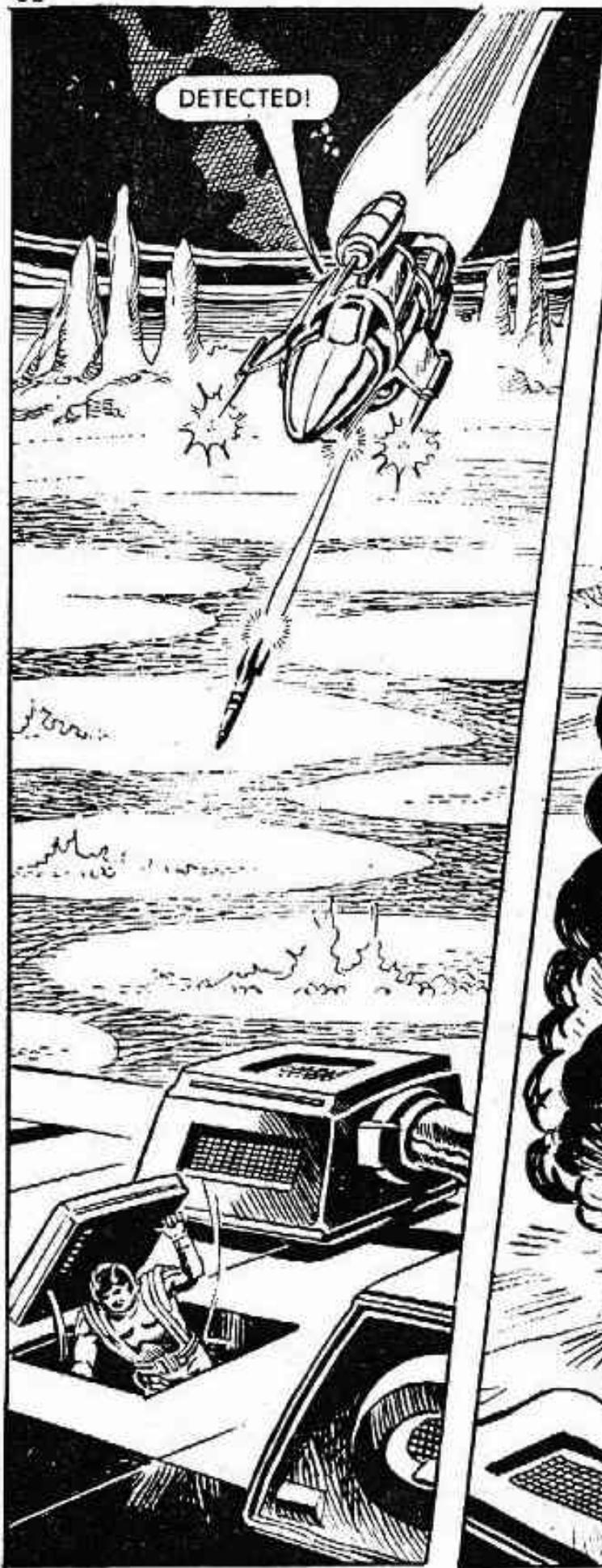
LOOK, A METAL EXTRACTOR!
CAN WE MAKE IT?

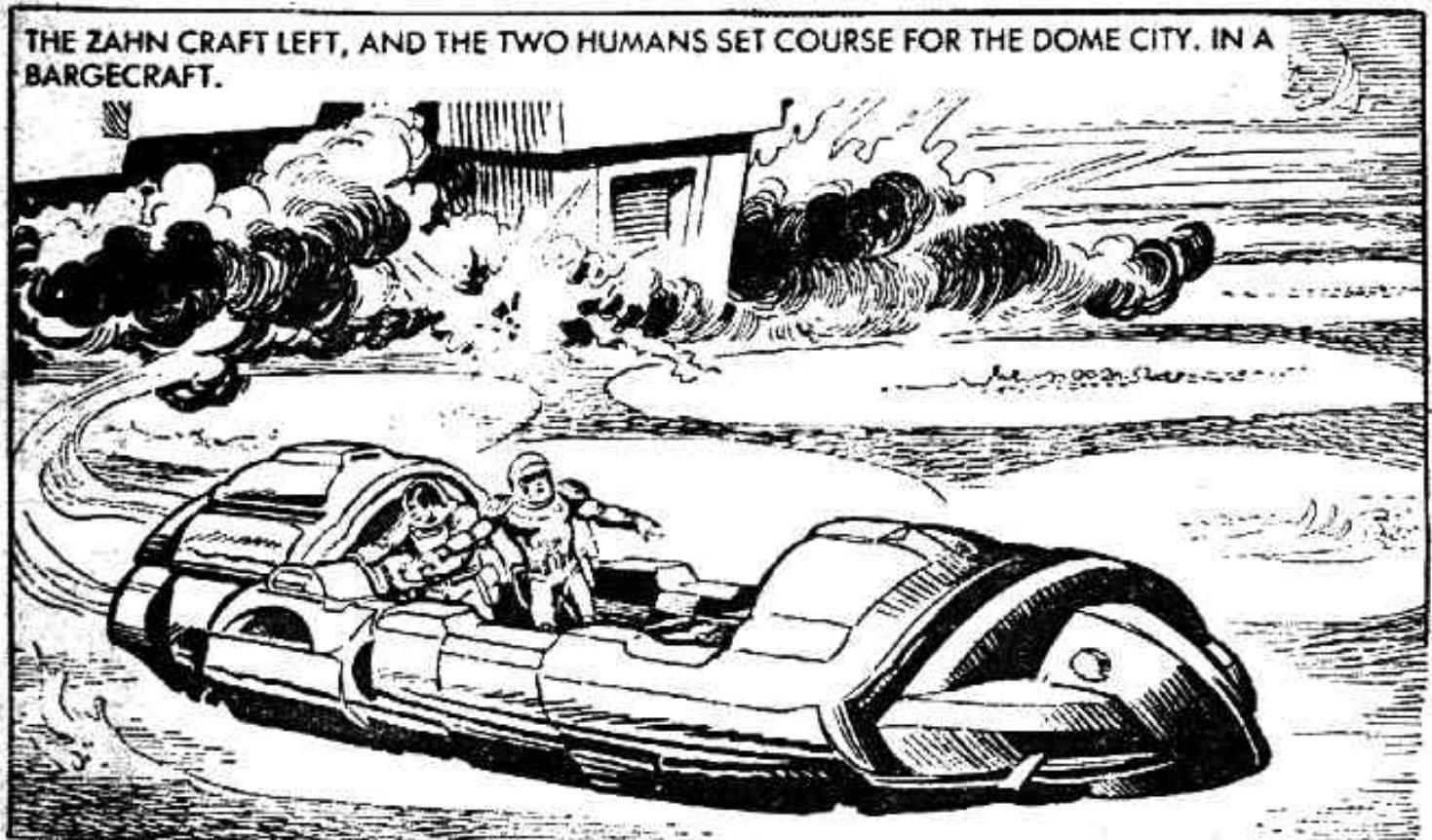


THE FAILING CRAFT MADE IT TO A FLOATING AUTOMATED PLATFORM, WHICH EXTRACTED PRECIOUS METALS FROM SEAWATER.

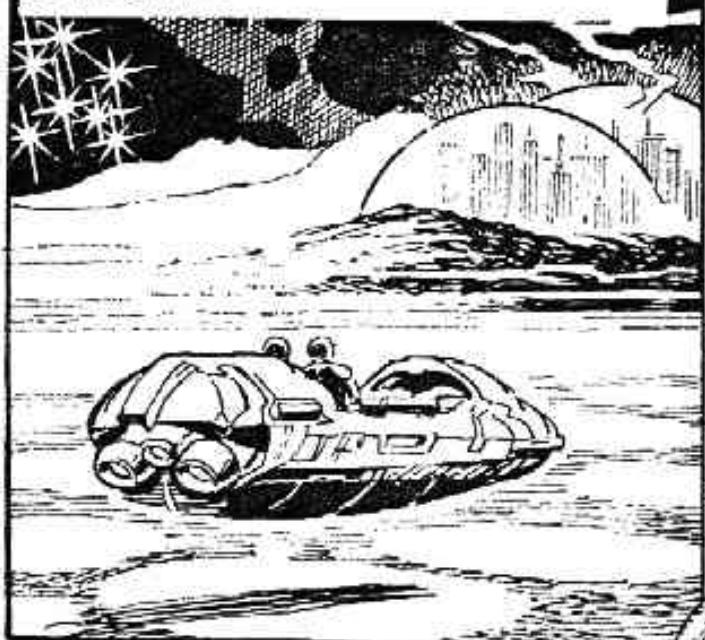
BLAST! TAKE COVER.







AFTER MANY UNITS TRAVEL THEY NEARED DOME CITY—



THEY HEADED ACROSS THE RADIATED GROUND TO THE DOME.



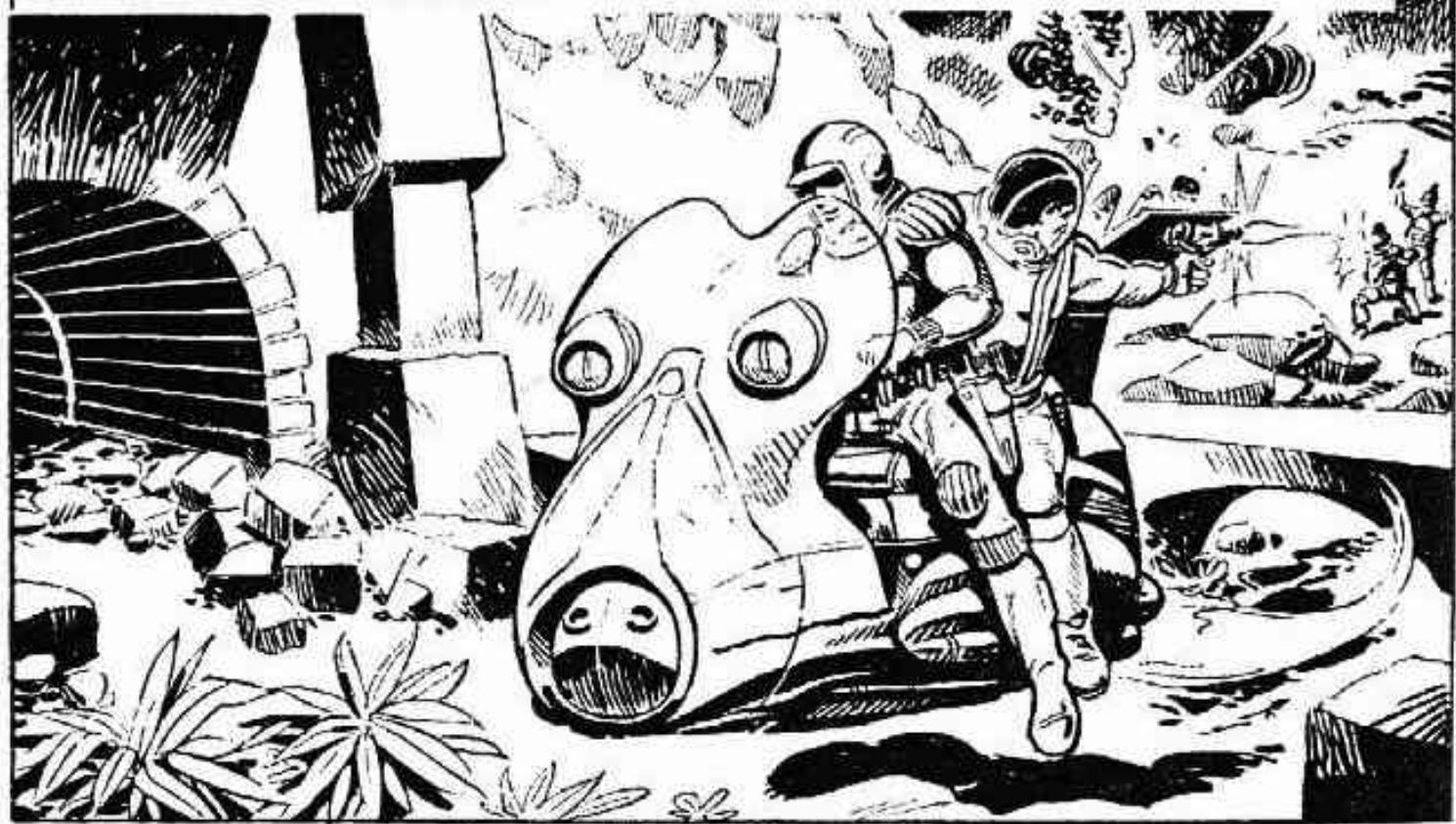
THE MEN REACHED THE DOME CITY'S HYDROPONIC CENTRE, BUT WERE SPOTTED.



A HOVERER!



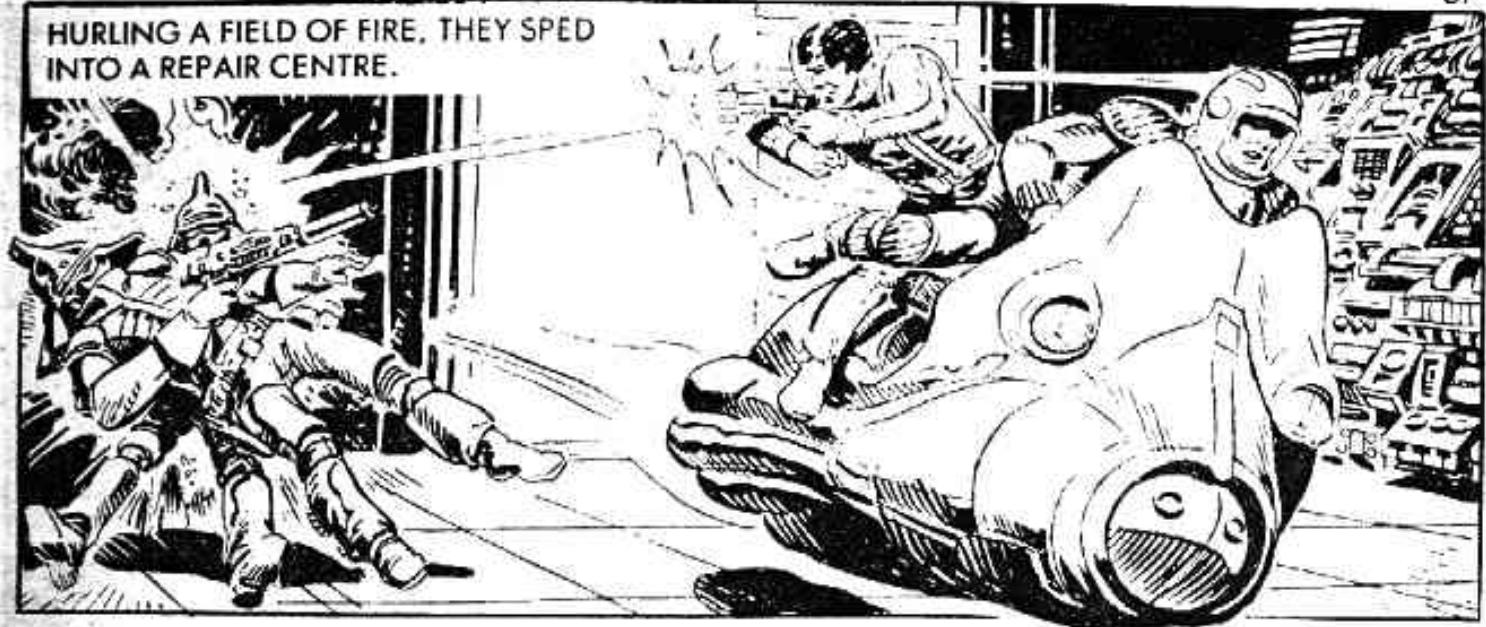
AGAR AND JAN DROVE THE HOVERER DOWN THE HALF-SUBMERGED TUNNEL CONNECTING THE HYDROPONIC WITH DOME CITY.



THEY REACHED THE END OF THE CONNECTING TUNNEL AND SHOT PAST ASTONISHED GUARDS INTO DOME CITY.



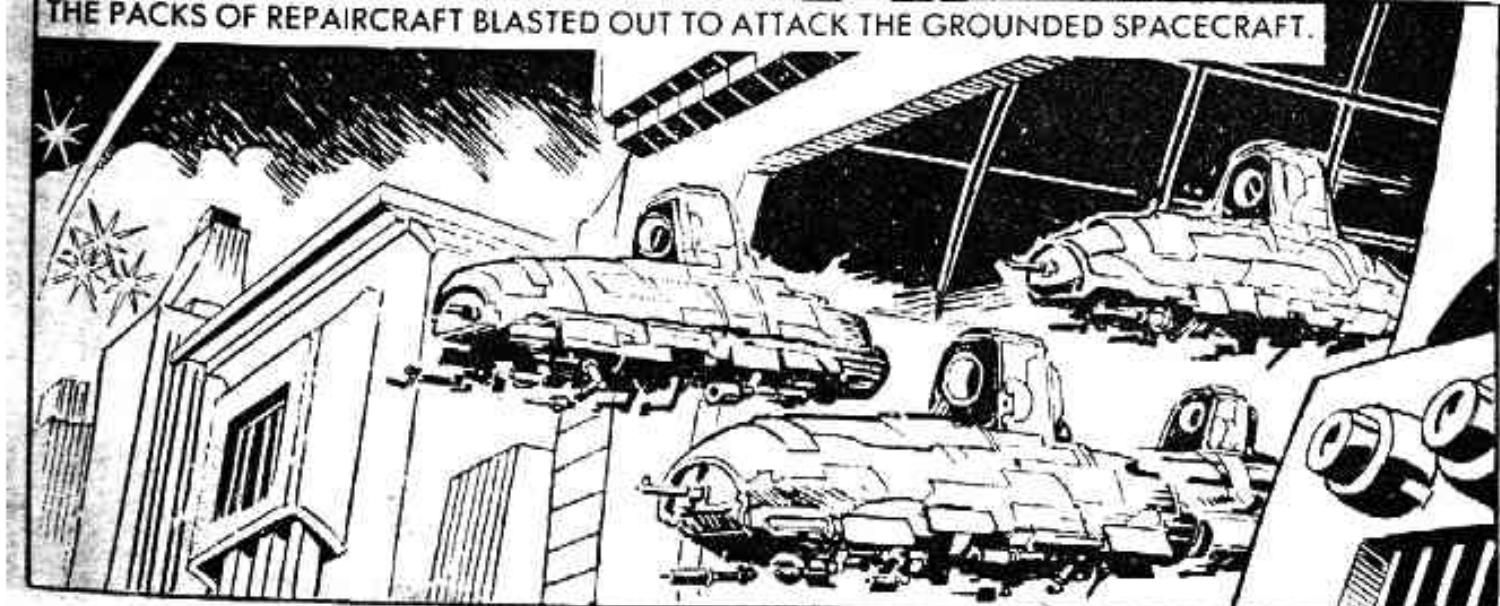
HURLING A FIELD OF FIRE, THEY SPED INTO A REPAIR CENTRE.



AGAR SET TO WORK—

I'VE PROGRAMMED ALL THE REPAIRCRAFT TO DEMOLISH VARIOUS TARGETS. WHILE THE ZAHN TRY TO STOP THEM . . . WE HEAD FOR THE BACK-UP COMPUTER.

THE PACKS OF REPAIRCRAFT BLASTED OUT TO ATTACK THE GROUNDED SPACECRAFT.



THE REPAIRCRAFT, DESIGNED TO WORK WITH THE TOUGHEST METALS AND FORCEFIELDS, FOUND LITTLE DIFFICULTY IN BREAKING DOWN THE ZAHN CRAFT'S DEFENCES.



THAT'S CAUSING THEM PROBLEMS.

NEXUS PLANNED A HASTY RETREAT—



RUN! MY ENTIRE FLEET LOST EXCEPT FOR THE LABSHIP.

NEXUS CALLED DOWN THE LABSHIP AND TRANSFERRED TO IT.

UNDER COVER OF THE ATTACK, AGAR AND JAN HEADED FOR THE BACK-UP COMPUTER.



I NOW MAKE THE SCIENCE SHIP MY HQ. YOU KEEP A TIGHT GRIP ON DOME CITY. GUARD OUR RESEARCHERS.



IT WAS A SHORT STEALTHY JOURNEY TO THE BACK-UP COMPUTER, AS YET UNDISCOVERED BY THE ZAHN.



THE TWO MEN HEARD A ZAHN PLAN—



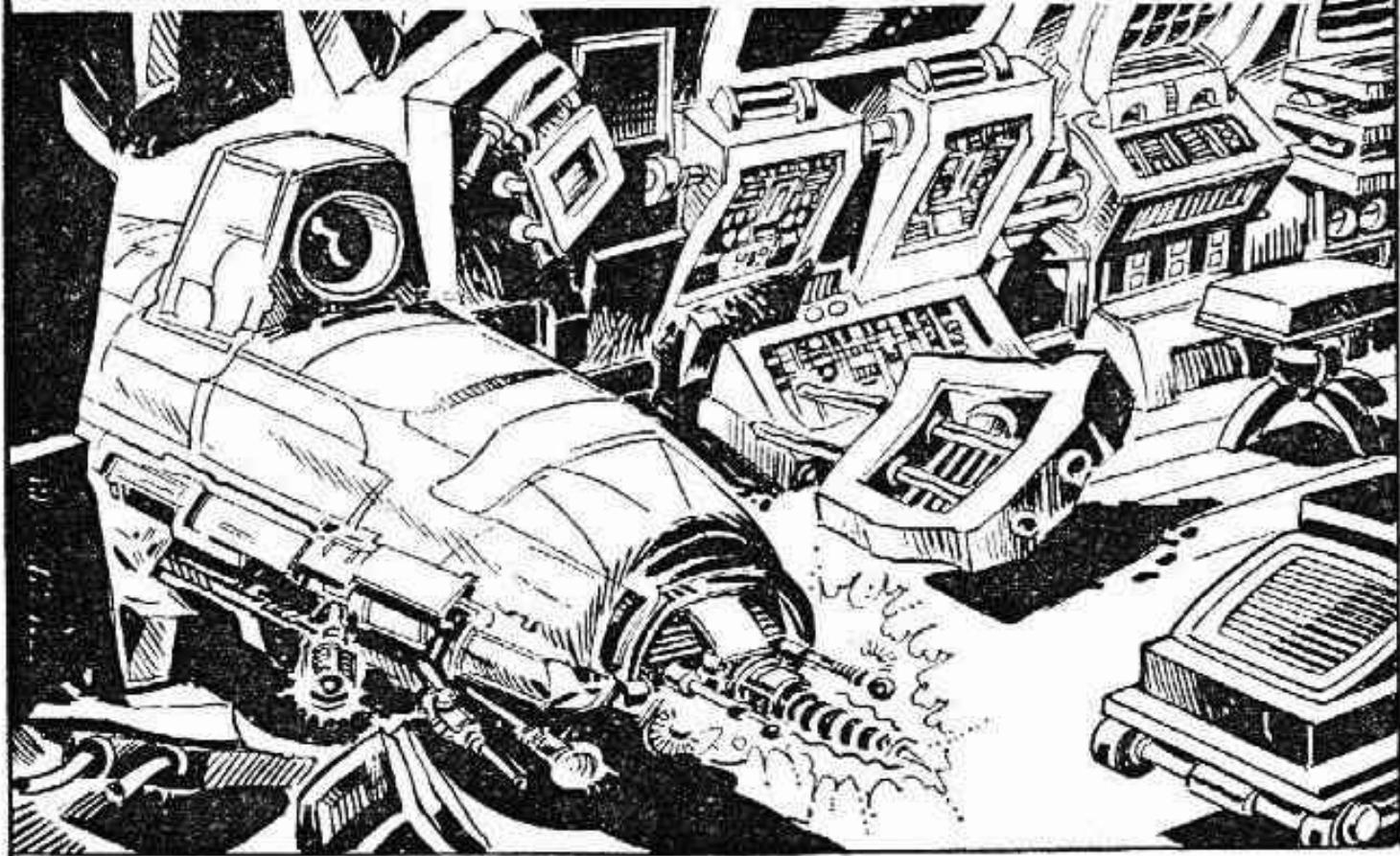
IN LESS THAN AN HOUR THEY'LL HAVE ANTI-GRAVITY, AND WE CAN'T STOP THEM.

NO! SO WE'LL LET THEM FINISH, THEN WE TAKE OVER.

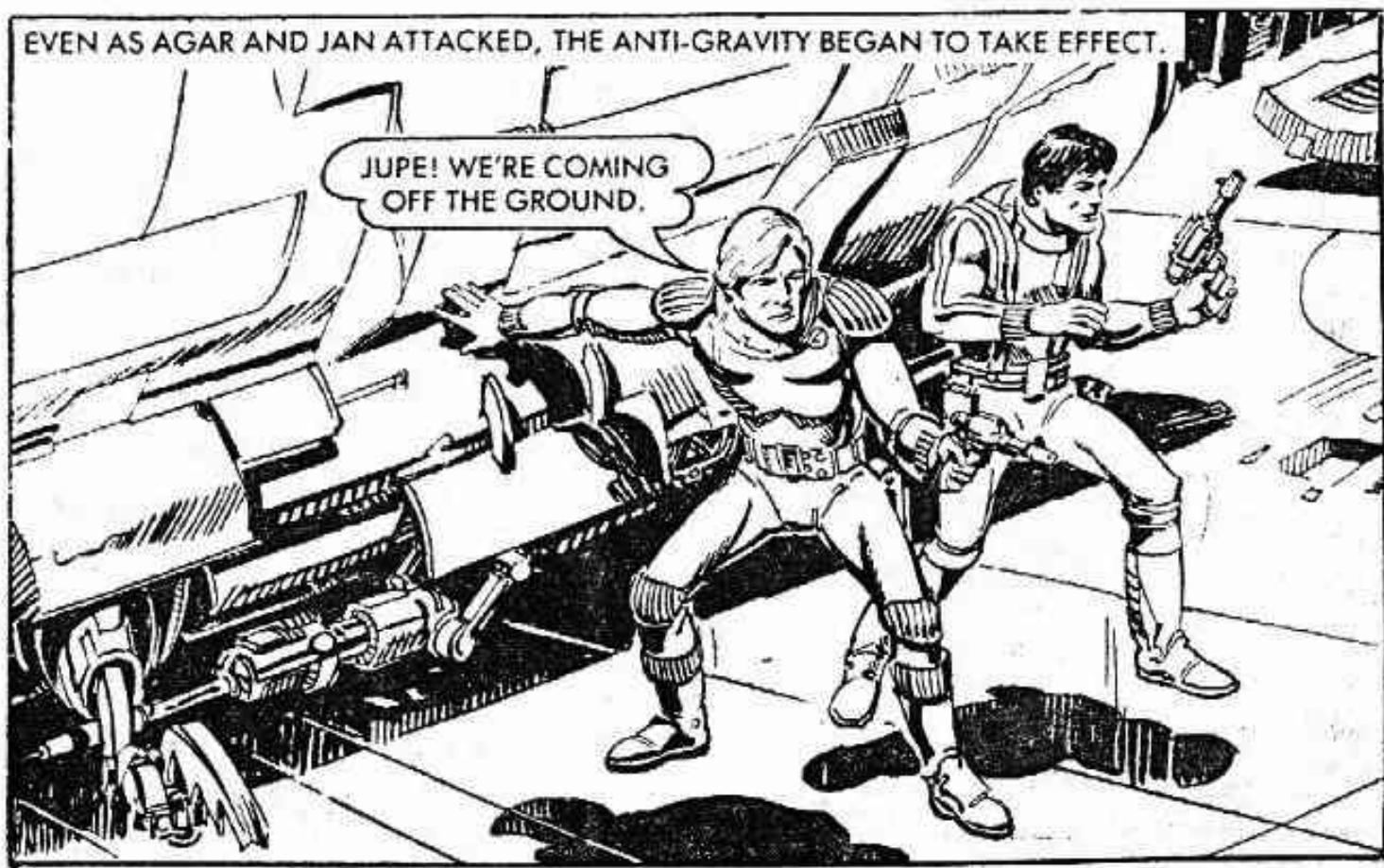
AGAR AND JAN CREEP BACK TO THE HOVPARK.

WITH THIS BORE WE CAN BREAK IN TO THE RESEARCH CENTRE.

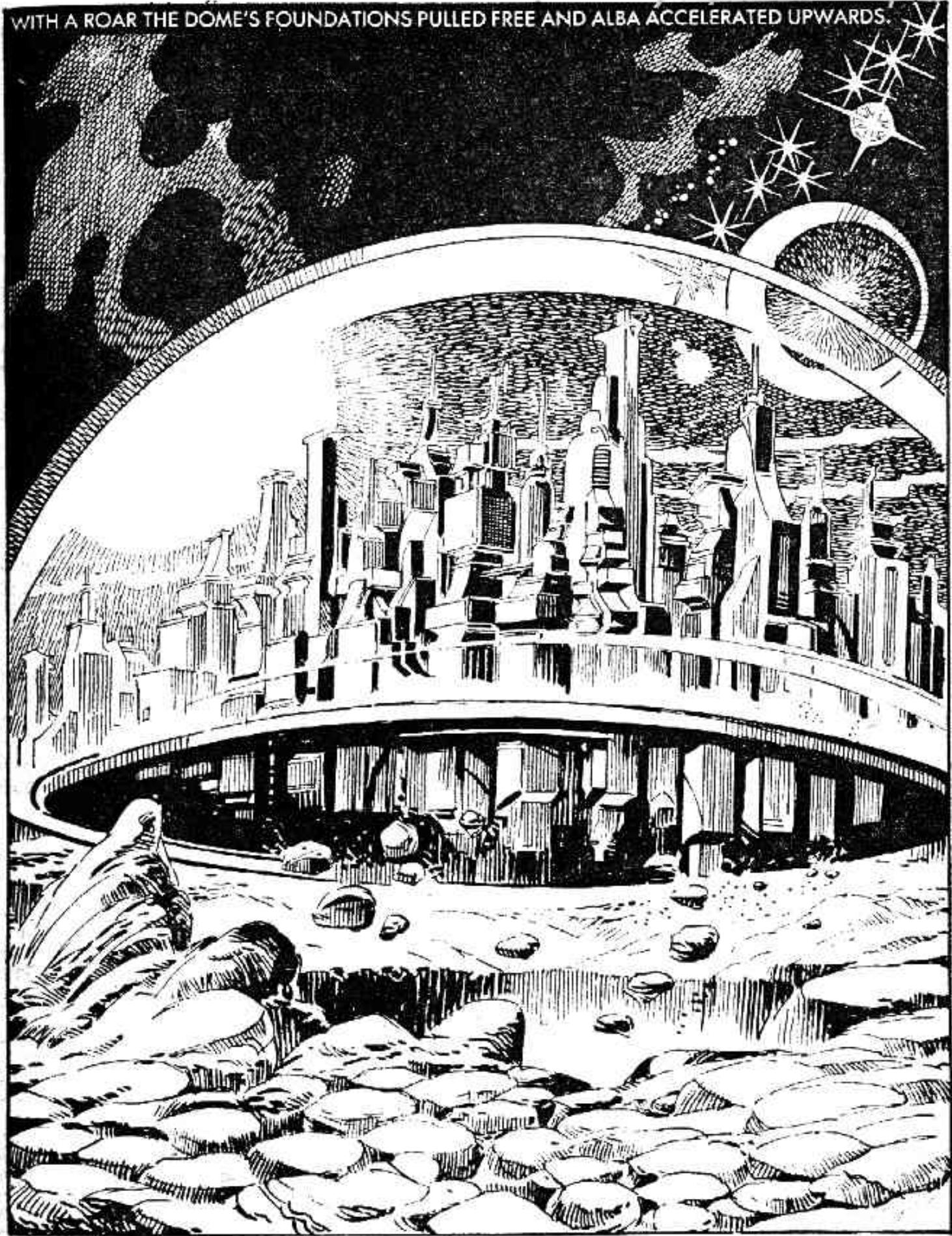
AGAR AND JAN WAITED UNTIL THEY JUDGED THE TIME WAS RIGHT, THEN USED THE BORER TO FORCE A WAY THROUGH.



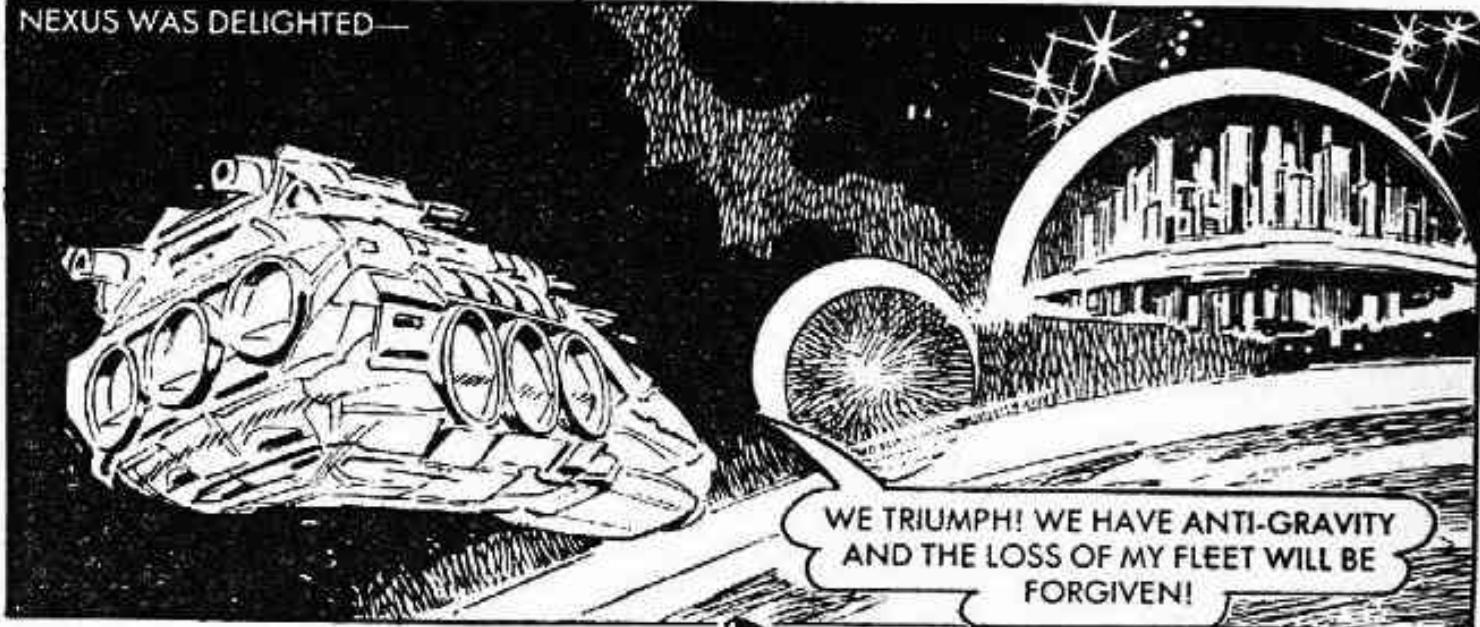
EVEN AS AGAR AND JAN ATTACKED, THE ANTI-GRAVITY BEGAN TO TAKE EFFECT.



WITH A ROAR THE DOME'S FOUNDATIONS PULLED FREE AND ALBA ACCELERATED UPWARDS.



NEXUS WAS DELIGHTED—



ON A VIDSCREEN, THE TWO WATCHED—

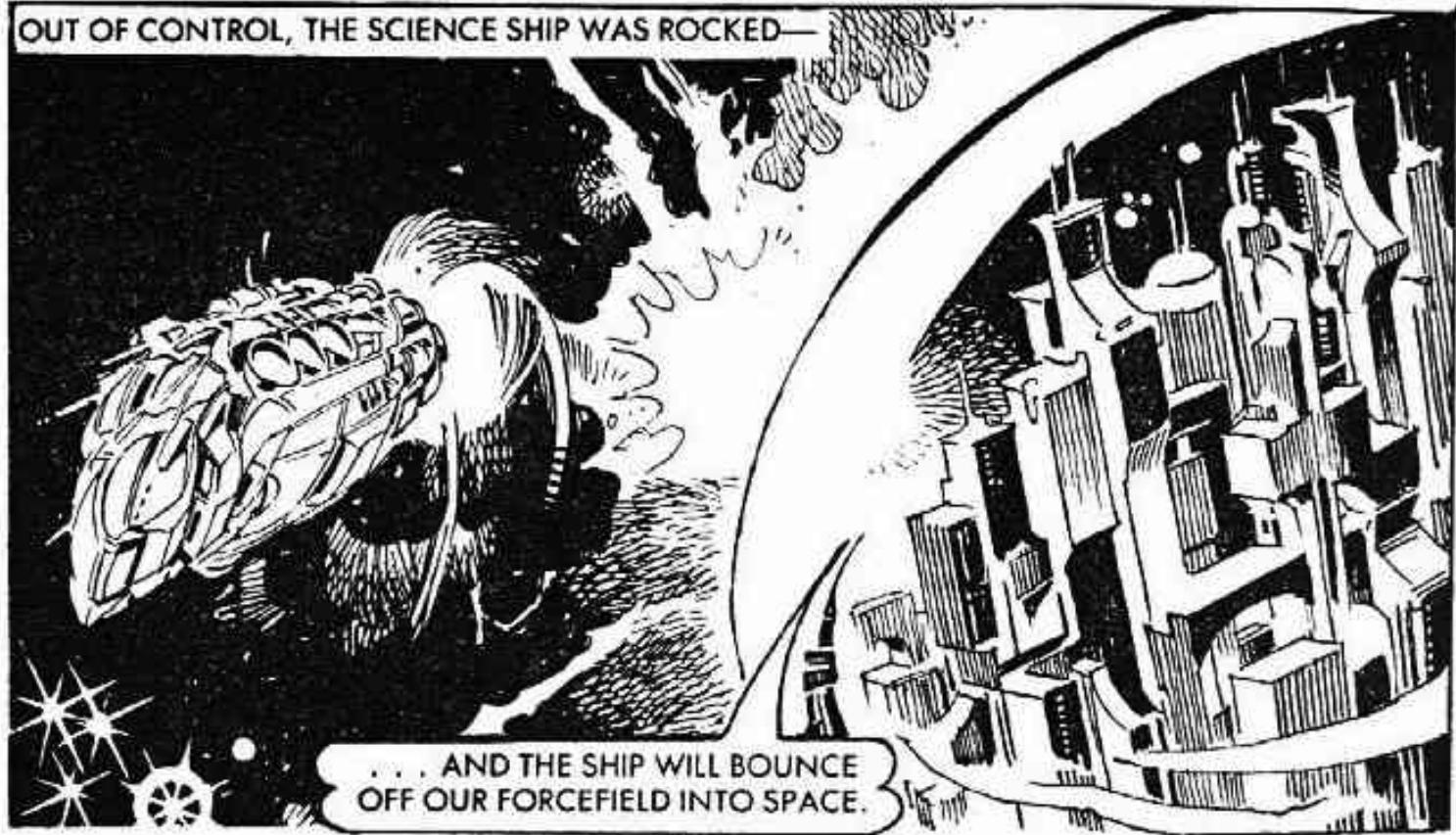
THEY THINK WE
ARE TRAPPED . . .



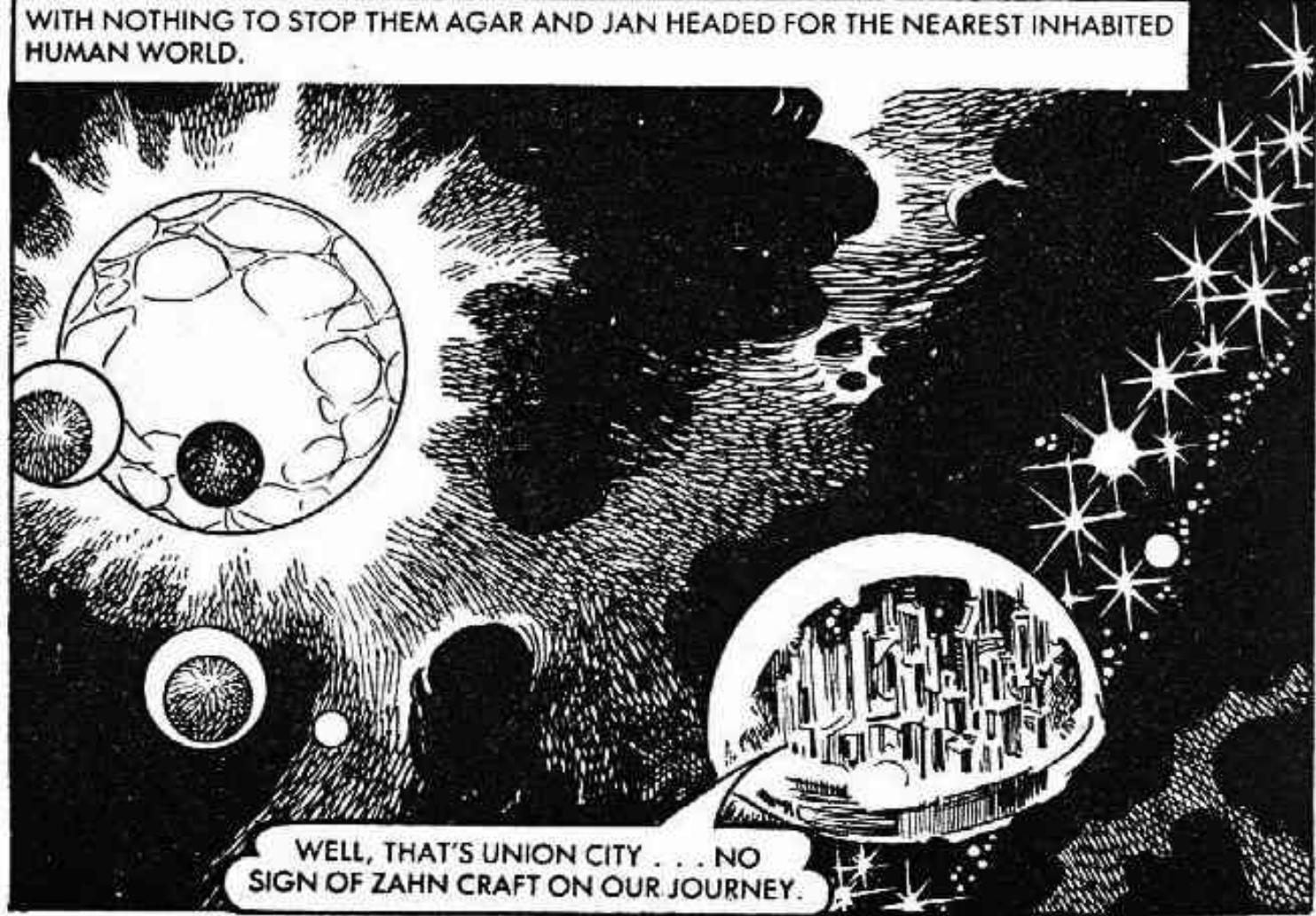
... BUT IF I STEP UP FIELD
POWER, THE BEAM WILL CONTRACT . . .



OUT OF CONTROL, THE SCIENCE SHIP WAS ROCKED—



WITH NOTHING TO STOP THEM AGAR AND JAN HEADED FOR THE NEAREST INHABITED HUMAN WORLD.



BUT AGAR HAD SPOKEN TOO SOON.

NEALL TRIED TO RUN FOR THE NEXT STAR SYSTEM, BUT ZAHN MISSILES SPED TOWARDS THEM.

THAT'S BECAUSE THEY'VE
ALREADY CAPTURED UNION CITY.



THE MISSILES ARE FLOATING!
THEY'VE LOST ALL SPEED!

OF COURSE! THERE'S NO
MOMENTUM OR INERTIA INSIDE THE
NON-GRAVFIELD. NOW IF I
CONTRACT THE FIELD? . . .



THE NEUTRON SHELL WAS DRAWN IN. THE MISSILES, FREED FROM THE NULL GRAVITY FIELD, SPED AWAY—



EVEN AS THE DOME CITY HEADED FOR ANOTHER PLANET, FORGOTTEN ZAHN INCHED THEIR WAY THROUGH ALBA'S HYDROPONIC UNIT.



AGAR AND JAN WERE SURPRISED—

DO NOT MOVE . . . I SHALL HAVE THE
GREATEST PLEASURE IN ATOMISING
YOUR HEAD.

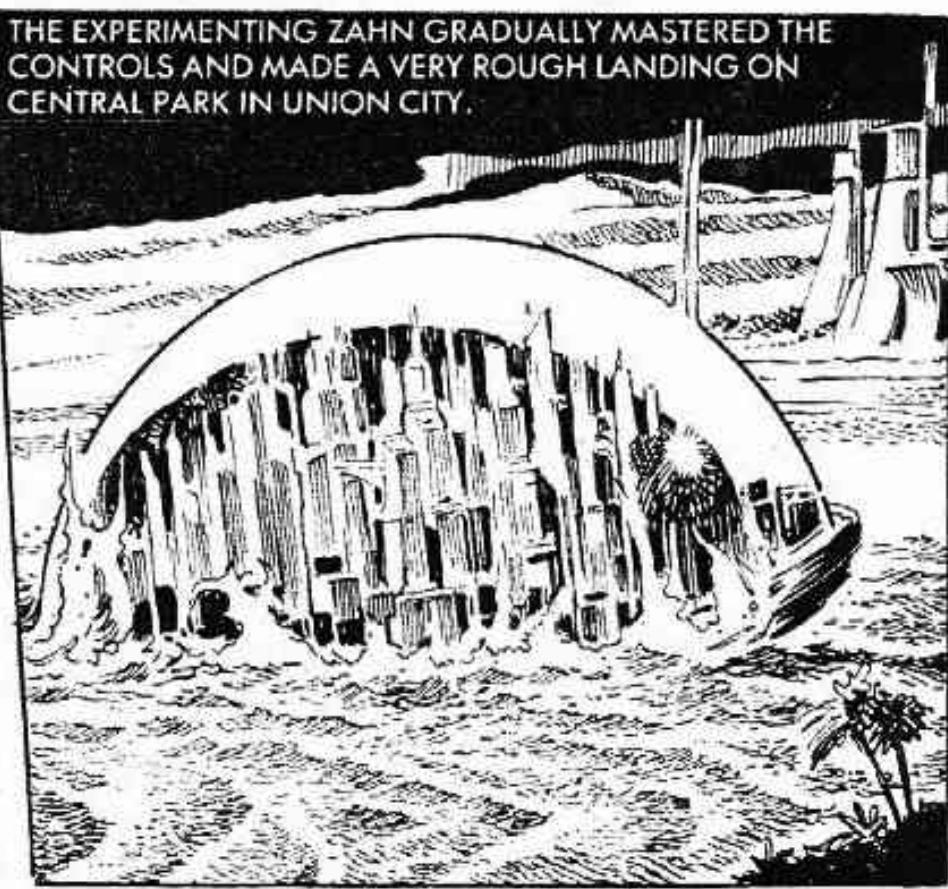


THE ZAHN COULD GET NO INFORMATION FROM
AGAR, SO THEY TINKERED WITH THE APPARATUS.



DOME CITY FELL,
PARTIALLY OUT OF
CONTROL, AS THE ZAHN
GAINED CONTROL BY
TRIAL AND ERROR.

THE EXPERIMENTING ZAHN GRADUALLY MASTERED THE
CONTROLS AND MADE A VERY ROUGH LANDING ON
CENTRAL PARK IN UNION CITY.



JAN WAS THE FIRST TO RECOVER—



WHILE JAN ESCAPED, AGAR WAS TAKEN TO AN INTERROGATION CENTRE.

WE HAVE ONE OF THE
TERRANS, AND HE WILL TALK.



JAN HAD A HARD DAY IN UNION CITY TRYING TO STAY FREE. JUST AS HE WAS ABOUT TO SURRENDER.

COME, TERRAN.



THE PEOPLE OF UNION CITY HAD TRIED TO STOP THE ZAHN INVASION, BUT FAILED. SOME HAD FLED TO SAFE PLACES AND IT WAS TO ONE OF THESE THAT JAN WAS BEING TAKEN BY A MEMBER OF THE RESISTANCE.



JAN WAS TAKEN TO THE LEADER AND PLANS LAID.



THEY ASSEMBLED WHAT FEW WEAPONS THEY HAD—

WE HAVE MOST OF WHAT IS NEEDED TO ARM DOME CITY FOR SPACE BATTLE, THE REST WE CAN MAKE.



THE RESISTANCE CREST TOWARDS DOME CITY, NOW IN THE PROCESS OF BEING EQUIPPED AS THE ZAHN'S ULTIMATE WEAPON.

WE CAN NEVER REACH THE DOME CITY . . . TOO MANY ZAHN.



AS THEY PLANNED THE NEXT MOVE, THE LABSHIP APPEARED—

NEXUS! I'D FORGOTTEN ABOUT HIM. ONCE HE FINDS OUT ABOUT THE DAMAGE WE'VE DONE HE'LL WANT TO TAKE IT OUT ON AGAR. WE'LL FOLLOW HIM.





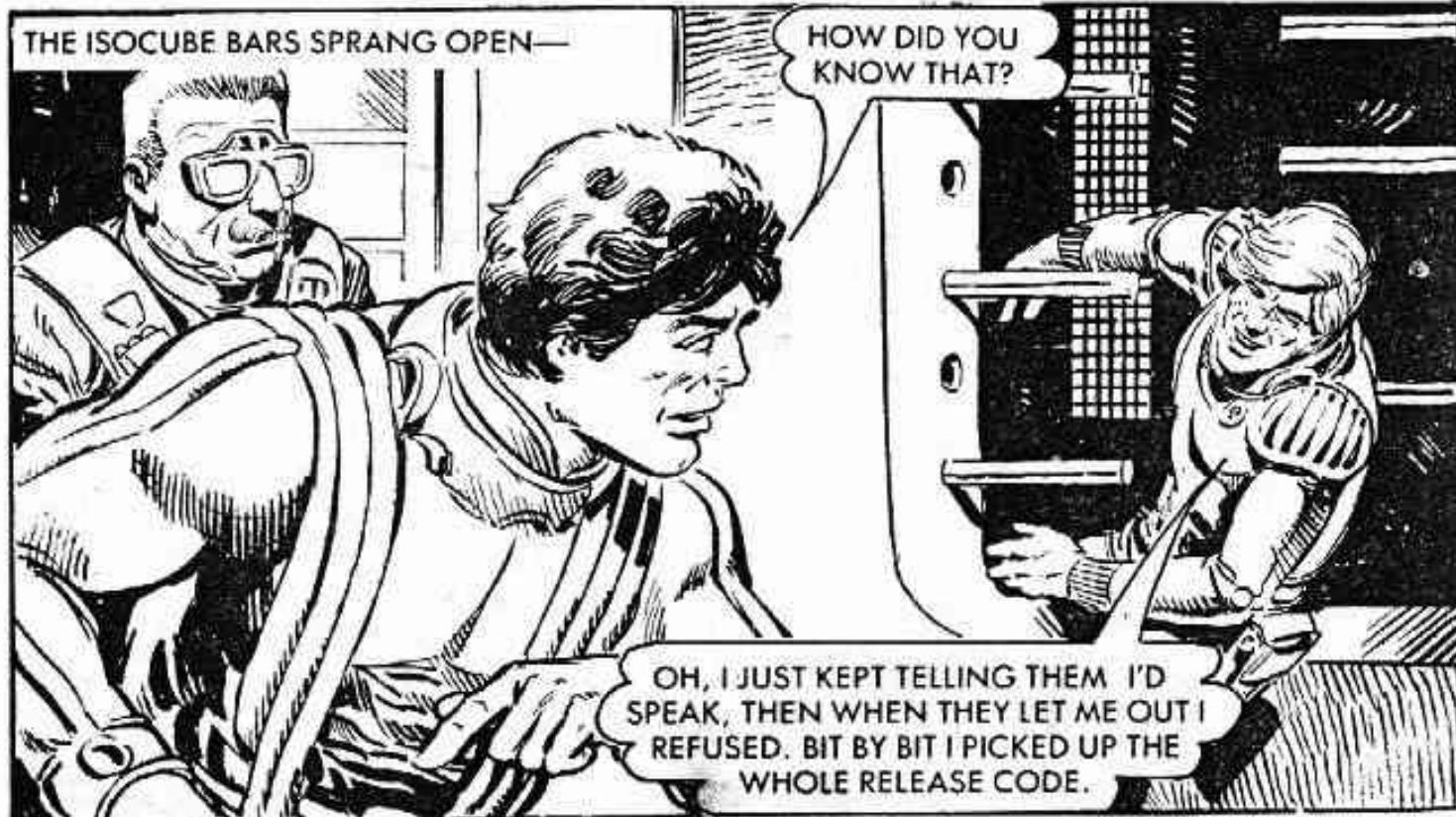
DONNING A UNIFORM THE
RESISTANCE LEADER BOLDLY MARCHED TO
THE FRONT DOOR—



ON LEVEL 7—



JAN DESPERATELY TRIED TO OPEN THE ISOCUBES BEFORE THE ALARM WENT OFF—



IN THEIR ANXIETY TO FREE AGAR, THEY HAD FORGOTTEN ABOUT NEXUS WHO WATCHED THEM ON A VIDUNIT—



YOU HAVE CAUSED CONSIDERABLE PROBLEMS—NOW YOU SHALL DIE.

WITH LEVEL 7 SEALED OFF, NEXUS PUMPED INTO A TOXIC NERVE GAS.



THIS LOOKS LIKE IT! ONCE THAT STUFF REACHES FACE LEVEL—GOODBYE UNIVERSE.



FOLLOWING THE RESISTANCE LEADER'S EXAMPLE, THEY BEGAN BLASTING AT THE FLOOR.

CONCENTRATE ON ONE AREA!

IF THIS STUFF GOES UP, THEN WE GO DOWN, SIMPLE.

INCH BY INCH THE HOLE
ENLARGED AS INCH BY INCH
THE GAS CREST HIGHER—

WE SHOULD
MAKE IT.

I THINK WE'RE
GOING TO MAKE IT.

JUMP!

... JUST ... MADE IT!

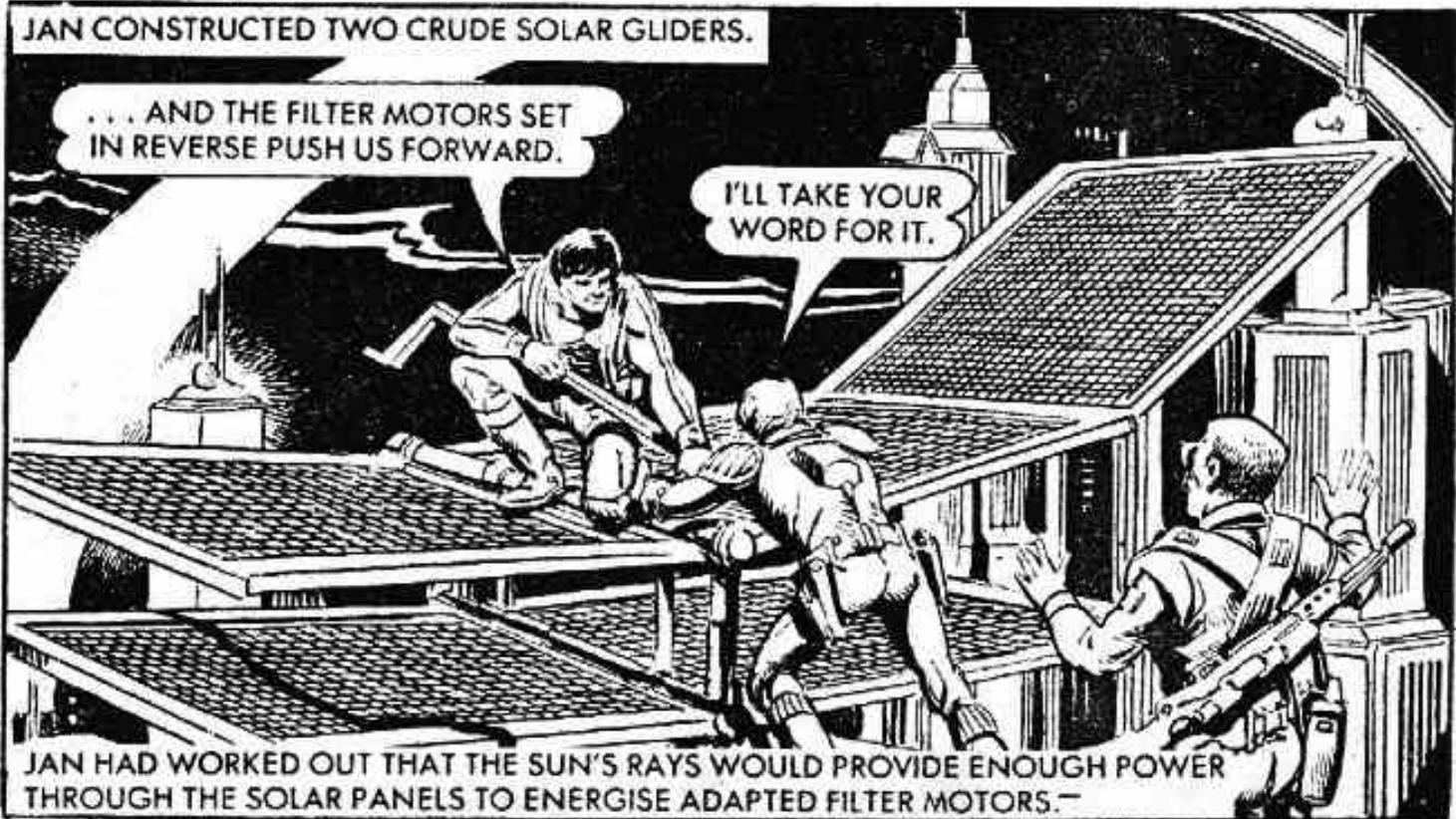
NEXUS WAS POWERLESS TO PREVENT THEIR ESCAPE AS HE'D OVERLOOKED THE POSSIBILITY OF THEM REACHING THE HOVPARK.



STEALTHILY THEY CREEPT BACK INTO THE CITY AND CLIMBED TO THE TOP OF A HIGH RESIDENTIAL BLOCK—



JAN CONSTRUCTED TWO CRUDE SOLAR GLIDERS.



AGAR AND JAN JUMPED—



SLOWLY THEY GAINED CONTROL—

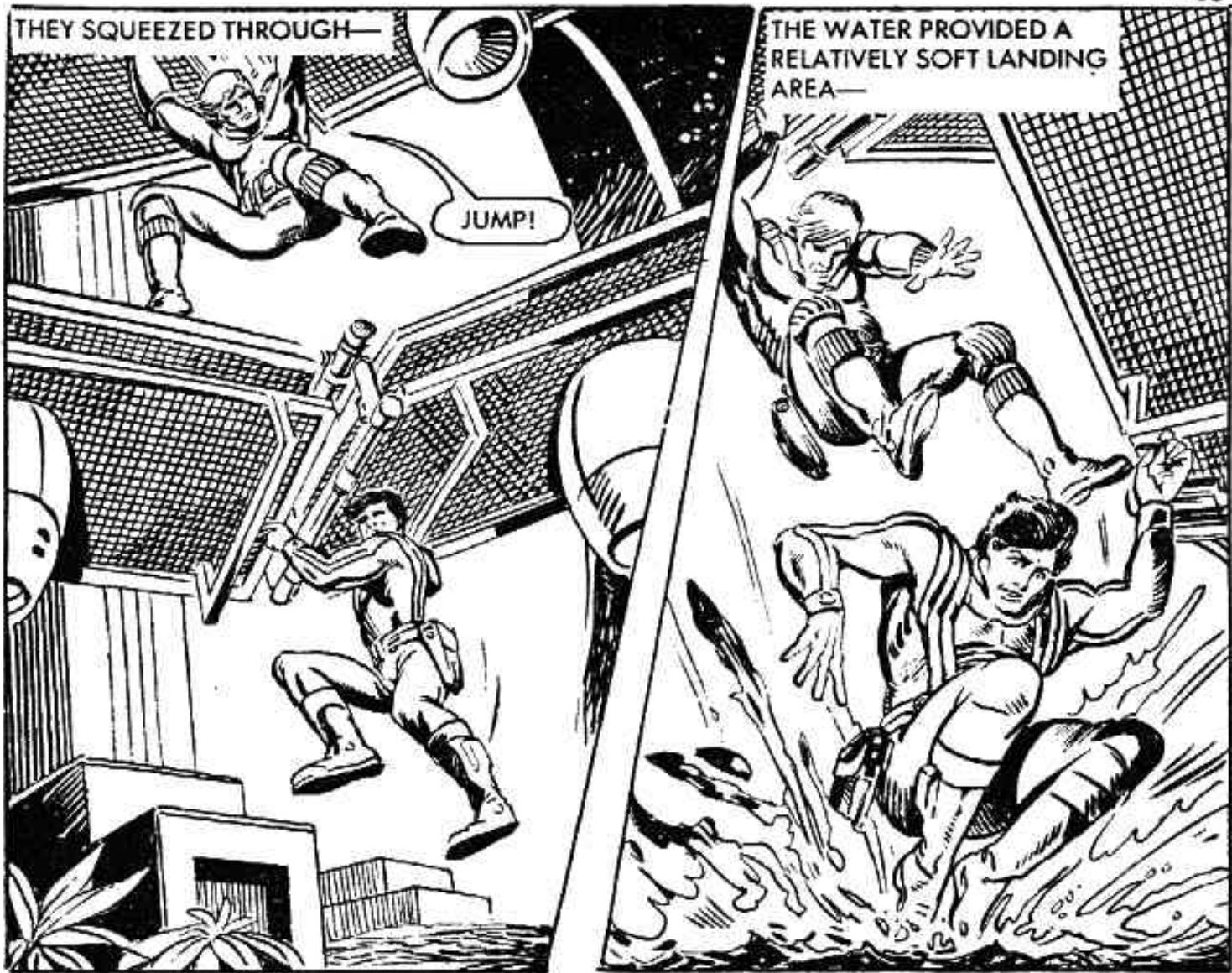


WHILE BEWILDERED ZAHN WATCHED, AGAR AND JAN SWEPT TOWARDS THE ONE WEAK SPOT.



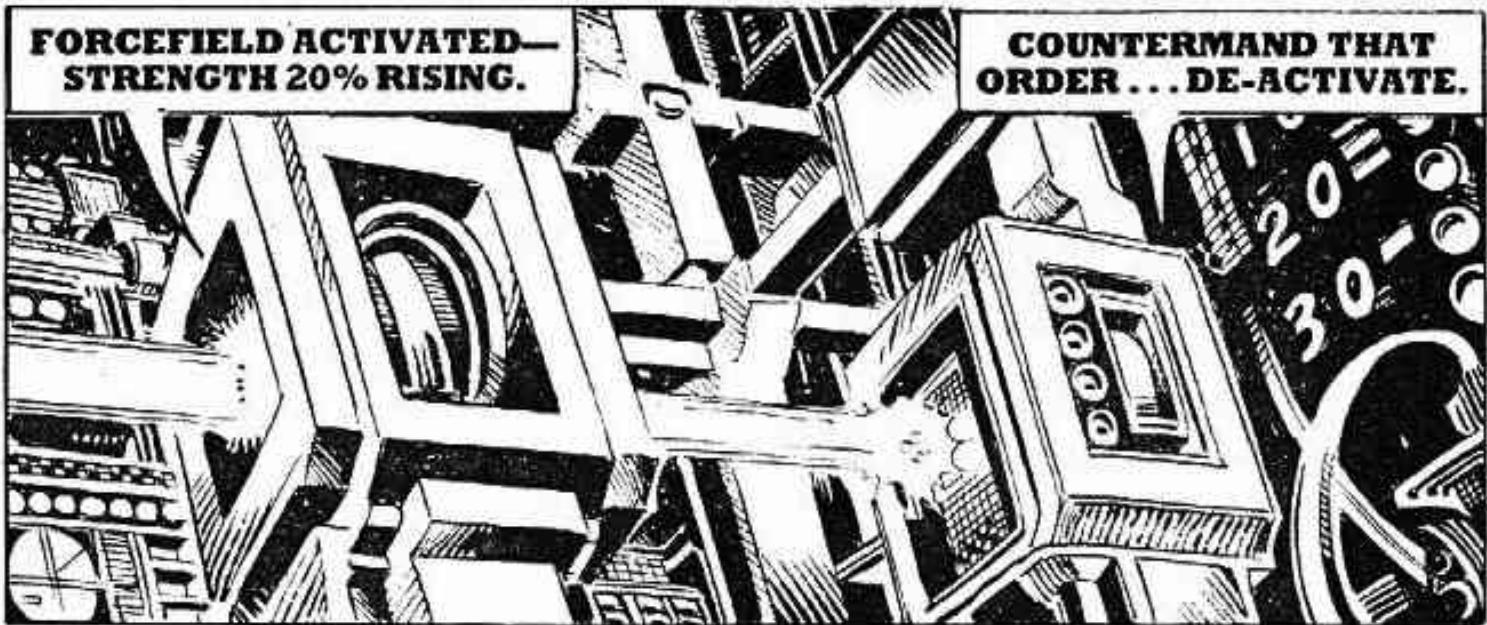
HOW DO WE STOP?

WE DON'T! WE CRASHLAND
IN THE WATER.



FORCEFIELD ACTIVATED—
STRENGTH 20% RISING.

COUNTERMAND THAT
ORDER . . . DE-ACTIVATE.



WHAT'S YOUR PLAN?

SWITCH OFF! NOW!

NEXUS HAD WATCHED EVERYTHING—

DID YOU COUNTERMAND
THE ORDER?

YES! THEY SHUT OFF THE
FORCEFIELD VERY ABRUPTLY.





THE SEETHING MASS OF ANTI-ENERGY, SUDDENLY DEPRIVED OF ITS ACTIVATING FORCE, COLLAPSED UNDER ITS OWN WEIGHT. LIKE A TIDE OF ADVANCING WATER IT FLOODED ACROSS THE SPACEPORT.



AND THE CENTRAL COMPUTER WAS TRYING TO REDUCE THE POWER? HADES—THE FIELD WILL COLLAPSE.



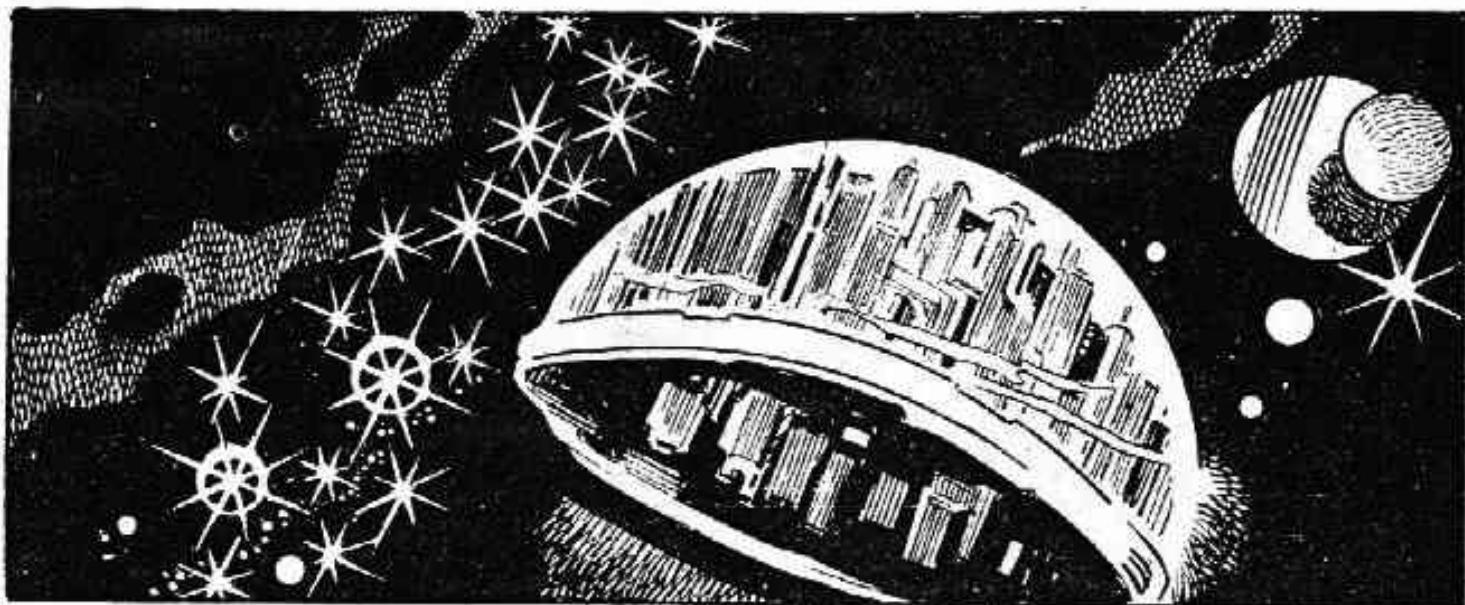
EVERYTHING IN THE PATH OF THE TIDE WAS DESTROYED.

SO IT ALL COMES TO THIS . . . THOSE CURSED TERRANS HAVE DEFEATED ME.

WITH THE ANTI-MATTER FIELD NOW UNDER CONTROL, THE DOME CITY LIFTED OFF. THE RESISTANCE MOVED IN TO WIPE UP THE ZAHN.



WITH THE ZAHN ON UNION CITY DISORGANISED, THE RESISTANCE HAD AN EASY JOB. DOME CITY, SAFE WITH THE SECRET OF ANTI-MATTER POWER HEADED FOR EARTH TO RETURN IT TO FORMER GLORIES.



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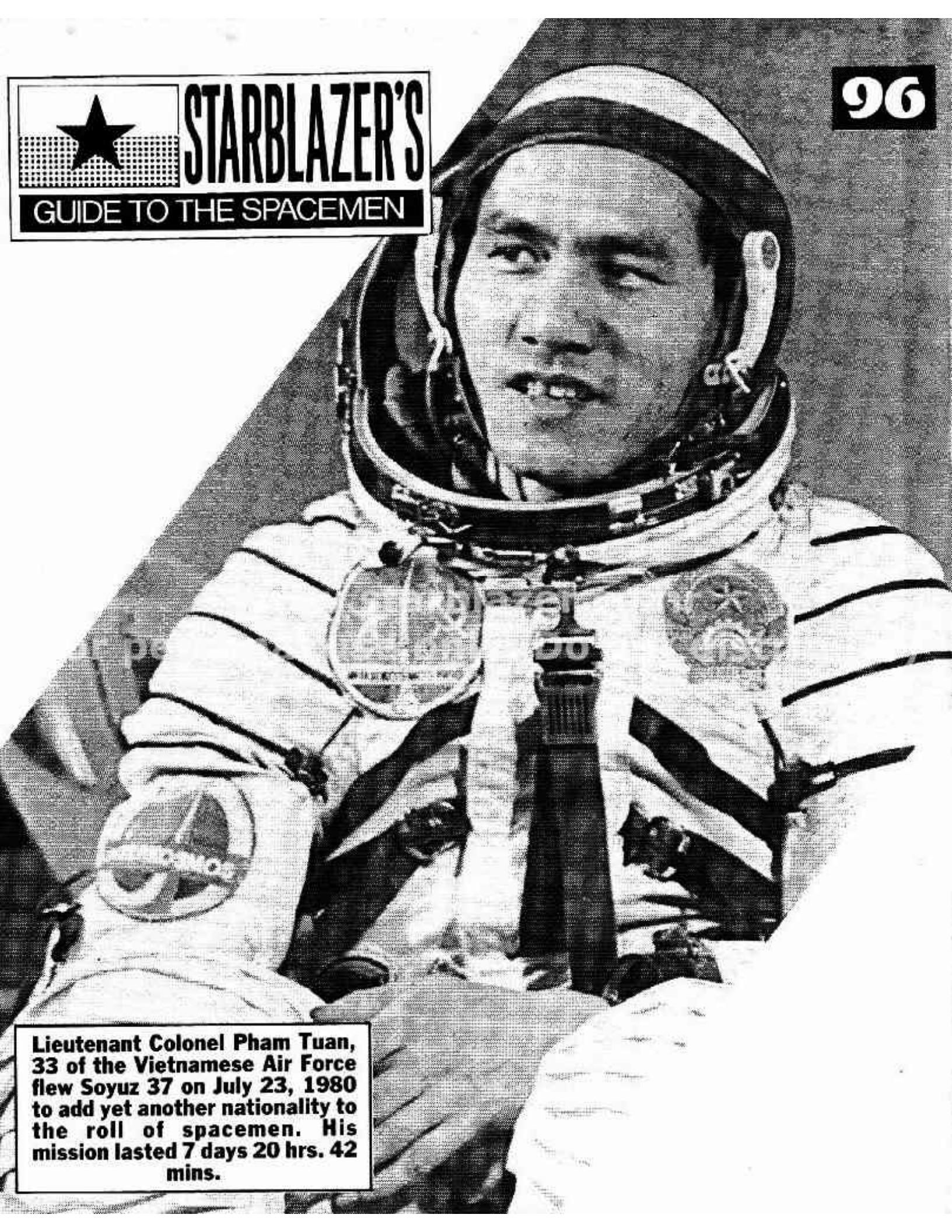
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**Lieutenant Colonel Pham Tuan,
33, of the Vietnamese Air Force
flew Soyuz 37 on July 23, 1980
to add yet another nationality to
the roll of spacemen. His
mission lasted 7 days 20 hrs. 42
mins.**